REPORT

OF

THE FOREST COMMITTEE

APPOINTED IN

G.O. No. 1677 R.

Dated 5th June 1912.

VOL. I.

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CHEPAUK,
15th *January* 1913.

From

THE PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE FOREST COMMITTEE,

To

THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS,
REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

SIR,

Introductory.

We have the honour to submit the report of the Committee appointed in G.O. No. 1677, Revenue, dated 5th June 1912, to consider and report on the proposed abolition of grazing fee for all local cattle, except sheep and goats, and on the kindred subjects of the provision of fuel and small timber and leaf manure.

Method of enquiry.

2. A preliminary meeting of the Committee was held in June 1912 and a set of questions was drawn up relating to the subjects on which the Committee were asked to report. The Collectors of the districts to be visited by the Committee were asked to distribute these questions among such officials as were likely to have knowledge of the matters involved, and also to intelligent members of the general public of all shades of opinion who might possess a knowledge of English. The Collectors were also asked to select witnesses from among the ryots, village officers, cattle owners, graziers and other rural inhabitants. To each of these was sent a statement in the vernacular explaining the matters into which the Committee were intending to enquire, and a notice was inserted in the press, giving the dates on which the Committee would sit for the hearing of evidence and inviting persons who desired to appear to send in their names to the Secretary of the Committee. A notice in the vernacular was also distributed with the village sheet of the District Gazette, explaining the objects of the Committee, and inviting any person interested to appear and give evidence. Special notices were sent to the inhabitants of villages adjoining the reserves inspected by the Committee, inviting them to be present and represent their grievances, if any, at the time of inspection. It will thus be seen that no effort was spared to ensure that any evidence which was likely to be of use should be brought before the Committee in the course of their enquiries. In all nearly three hundred and fifty witnesses were formally examined, thirty seven officials, including the Collector and District Forest officer of each district visited by the Committee, the Conservators of Forests who had these districts in their charge, and selected Divisional officers, Tahsildars and Rangers; and about three hundred non-officials of all kinds, from past and present members of the Legislative Council and Presidents of District and Taluk Associations to collections of Lambadi herdsmen, Golla shepherds or Boya women. Numerous petitions were also received from most of the districts of the Presidency.

Districts visited by the Committee.

3. The following districts were selected by the Committee as the scene of their enquiries:—

Nellore.—A district noted for the excellence of its cattle and for its peculiar system of grazing.

Guntūr.—A typical district of the Northern Circars, and the home of the best of the so-called Nellore cattle.

Madura.—A typical Southern district, where the Committee had the opportunity of seeing forests intensively worked for fuel for the supply of large towns, where they encountered the grievance of dear fuel in its acutest form, and where the question of removal of leaf manure from forests could be studied in its most pressing aspect.

Anantapur.—A typical Deccan district, where the question of the re-afforestation of barren hills could be studied, and where the difficulties attending thereon had already been made the subject of special enquiry.

Chingleput.—Where village forests have already, if only tentatively and on a very small scale, been brought into actual working, and where the question of small reserves in the immediate proximity of villages is particularly prominent.

4. It will thus be seen that the Committee have visited a Northern district, two East Coast districts, a Deccan district and a Southern district. Numerous requests for the Committee to visit other localities have been received, but since it was clearly impossible, as was anticipated by Government, for the Committee to visit all districts, it was decided that the original programme should be followed. Before visiting each district a programme was worked out in consultation with the local officers to enable the Committee to visit representative forests of the district. As a rule the mornings were employed in inspecting the reserves, and the afternoons in hearing the evidence of those witnesses already summoned by the Collector, and of others who were present with a grievance to represent or a remedy to suggest. A record of the evidence formally recorded at the afternoon sittings will be found appended to this report; but perhaps the most valuable evidence regarding the grievances incident to forest reservation was that received in informal discussions with the villagers in the forest itself, when their allegations of hardship could, to some extent, be tested by actual inspection.

Order of the report.

5. The subjects on which the Committee have been desired to report have been divided by Government into twelve questions, which have been grouped under four heads—grazing, fuel, leaf manure, and general. An attempt will be made at the end of this report to summarise the opinions of the Committee on each of these questions; but for the purpose of clearness of exposition it has been found more convenient not to follow the exact order of the questions as set out in the Government reference. In particular it is difficult to dissociate the question of grazing in the forests and of the supply of small timber and fuel from the general question as to how far the reserved forests have failed to meet the wants of the villagers, and the question of the cause of this failure, if failure there has been, and the remedies which the Committee would suggest. This report will, therefore, deal, first of all, with the grievances of the rural population entailed by forest reservation both generally, and as regards grazing in particular.

Grazing and Connected Questions.

Free grazing.

6. That these grievances are many and are severely felt is the unanimous opinion of the Committee. Some of the grievances may not indeed be strictly legitimate, inasmuch as any attempt to conserve the forest property of the State must entail a certain amount of control, which must appear irksome and unnecessary to a population accustomed to look only to its immediate interests in such matters. Even in the case of these grievances, however, an attempt will be made to devise means of mitigating them, if to remove them altogether is impossible. It will be well perhaps to deal first with the grievance which was the immediate cause of the appointment of this Committee, the demand that grazing should be free to all cattle, or to any particular class of cattle. The Committee, after giving the matter every consideration in all the five districts which they have visited, are convinced that the levy of the present small fee is not felt as a hardship, whatever hardship may be the result of the methods by which it is levied. By this statement it is not meant that the ryot population would not prefer to obtain grazing for their cattle for nothing rather than pay the small sum now demanded of them. But the trend of the best agricultural opinion and even that of the ordinary ryot population of the country may be summed up in the words of a witness from Nellore "It is not the fee that we care about: the fee

is nothing, it is the worry." In Nellore in particular, it will not be too much to say that the ryots, as a rule, are prepared to pay considerably higher fees for grazing, if the grazing were so regulated that there would be grass enough for their valuable animals to have their fill. So far from it being felt as a grievance in Guntūr and Nellore that grazing, if there be any grass, is not given for nothing, the Committee were amused to find that the term "free grazing" was misunderstood in some places to mean the right to graze all over the forests, and was not considered to have anything to do with the question of the levy of a fee. The Committee have had before them the resolutions of the Nellore and Madura district conferences for several years. In each case the grievances of the people as regards forest matters were expounded in a series of resolutions, but no mention was made of the hardship entailed by the levy of a grazing fee. It is true that a large number of witnesses, who represented educated rather than agricultural opinion, maintained that the fee was too heavy ; but the value of this evidence was in at least two cases discounted by the fact that the witnesses were unable to say what the fee was. On the other hand there was in almost all districts clear evidence to prove that, provided there is any grass, the fee is a mere trifle in comparison with the advantages gained. In Nellore, for instance, it was found that private owners of bidus (pasture lands) charged anything from one rupee to (in one case) eight rupees per head of cattle. In shrotriem villages in Nellore, under conditions very similar to those prevailing in the Government forests, a charge of Rs. 1–8–0 a head was made for cattle from a distance, As. 8 for local cattle, and Re. 1 for local ploughing bullocks. In Chingleput the hire of a pair of bullocks to plough for one day was stated to be As. 8, so that the fee for one year's grazing could be earned in a few hours. In shrotriem villages near Vinukonda in Guntūr district a charge of Rs. 4 for each pair of ploughing bullocks was paid without a murmur. But though it cannot be maintained that the levy of a fee is generally considered a hardship, and the Committee are agreed that it should not be so considered, it is nevertheless true that in Madura and in Anantapur districts the Committee did meet with a general request that free grazing should be granted. As a rule, there was no trace of any such demand having been previously put forward, the only clear instances being a telegram sent to the King Emperor by one or two ryots in Rāmnād district, requesting that free grazing be granted as a Coronation boon, and a resolution in favour of free grazing moved at one or two conferences by Mr. Paul Peter Pillai, who is of opinion that the grazing of an unlimited number of cattle, and periodical burning are beneficial to the forests. In the districts however where the demand for free grazing was met with, it was almost invariably accompanied by a demand for free fuel, free leaf manure and free agricultural timber––in fact, a demand for the abolition of all control and for the right to use or to destroy the forests property of the State without any restriction whatever, the one exception being that in Anantapur the request was in every case modified by the statement that goats should be excluded from the concession. It was fortunate that the Committee were able to observe the results of such a concession in the very districts where the demand was made. In Madura in particular the state of the Zamindari hills, where the Zamindari ryots have been allowed to work their own will with practically no restrictions, was admitted to be such that the supply of fuel from the Zamindari forests, extensive though they are, is so rapidly decreasing as to have but little effect on the price of fuel in Madura town. Near Ayyalur in Madura district, on the Toppusamimalai, the contrast between the well-stocked Government reserves and the bare rocks of the Zamindari portion of the same hill could not fail to strike the most superficial observer. Equally striking in every district was the result of leaving the unreserved Government lands under their present nominal control.

7. As has already been pointed out, the chief ground on which this demand for free removal of forest produce was based was that, from time immemorial, the produce of the jungle had been enjoyed by the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages, without cost, and without restriction. Even if this be admitted, and it will be seen it is by no means universally true, it cannot be doubted that what was a fair concession when more than half the country was covered with jungle and the clearance of this jungle was looked upon as a public benefit, may well become a most unreasonable demand in different conditions. How much conditions have changed can be seen from a comparison of the figures showing the area of ryots holdings in the Madura district itself. In 60 years the area has more than doubled. Fuel, which had once scarcely

more market value than the air they breathe, has now to be bought by the people of Madura at about Rs. 15 a ton. In the light of the numerous imposts then placed on every article of value, from indigo vats to dhoby stones, it is hardly too much to say that, if the rulers of the district in the eighteenth century had thought that the tax would yield anything at all, it would have been levied.

8. But the right to remove forest produce and to graze in the forests was by no means universally free in this Presidency in olden days. Especially was this the case in the best grazing districts. In the firman granted by the Sultan of Golconda to the British settlers at Masulipatam, about 1634, one of the taxes from which they were relieved was "Buncca", "a term meaning forest produce which may be taken to mean a tax on fuel and grazing." In Guntūr, a grazing tax (Pullari) was levied at least as far back as 1797. In 1856 this tax amounted to over a lakh of rupees. In Nellore at the same date, it was more than lakh and a half. In Bellary, Rajahmundry, Kurnool, Vizagapatam, Cuddapah and Madura, taxes on forest produce of various kinds, such as wax, fuel, grazing for sheep and goats, gum and bark were levied. The amount in each case, except for sheep and goats, was not large. But the fact that the tax was levied at all is sufficient to show that there was no idea prevalent that any produce of land which was at the disposal of the State was not to be taxed, if there was a market for it. It is interesting to note, even if it be impossible to prove any connection between the two facts, that the cattle in places where the ryots have always paid for their grazing, as in Nellore, Guntūr and in Dharapuram taluk of Coimbatore, are immensely superior to any other cattle in the Presidency. These are practically the only places where there is any attempt at scientific breeding, and where the keeping of a number of useless cattle merely for prestige is rare, if it exists at all. The argument that the charge for forest produce is opposed to tradition, and is therefore unfair, is considerably blunted by the fact that it has now been levied for thirty years. One witness was prepared to admit that hereafter, when the ryots have advanced still further on the road to prosperity, it would be equitable that the charge, which should now be removed, should be levied again. It cannot however be doubted that the re-imposition of such a charge once remitted would create much greater discontent than if it had never been removed. Moreover the question of rights of free pasture or free produce was, at the time of the Forest Settlement, the subject of investigation in all cases where such a claim was made. In a large number of cases the claim was rejected, but it was admitted in some cases, and it need hardly be said the Committee do not recommend any interference with the rights thus admitted once for all. On the other hand they do not consider that it would be just to reopen the question of claims which have already been negatived by a competent tribunal.

W. Foster. Letters of the East India Company.

Kistna District Manual.

B.P. No. 4462, *dated* 12*th December* 1857.

9. Apart from the general question of free grazing or free forest produce there remains the question of free grazing for local or agricultural or local agricultural cattle. As regards agricultural cattle, the Committee were confronted at the outset with the fact that in the great majority of places agricultural cattle are not sent to the forest at all. In the village forests of Chingleput where grazing is free, the only animals which do not benefit are the agricultural cattle which are stall-fed in the villages. The chief reasons why they are not sent to the forest appeared to be the risk from disease, the danger from wild animals, and the fear that they would not get sufficient grazing to keep up their strength. In Anantapur an additional reason given was that the feet of these heavy animals would not stand climbing over hard boulders. If agricultural cattle are to be sent to the forest at all they should be sent to places specially reserved for them, where the number of cattle allowed to graze is strictly limited, where the grazing is so regulated that there is no danger of their coming into contact with diseased cattle, and where the grass is reserved for some time after the commencement of the rains, so that there is sufficient grazing to keep up their strength. These conditions are realised to some extent by the kancha system in Nellore, where a cattle owner is able on payment to reserve a portion of the forest for

Free grazing for agricultural cattle.

his own cattle, and to see that they are properly guarded and that their number is limited. In the delta tract of the Guntūr district the cattle are sent to the forests for several months while the crops are on the ground, for the simple reason that there is no place in the villages for them to stand, much less for them to graze. The evidence recorded as regards cattle of this type shows conclusively that where the cost of feeding them in the villages is about Rs. 5 a month, to remit the sum of As. 3 or As. 4 or at the most As. 8 a year, which is all they have to pay to Government for forest grazing, would be no boon at all. Even if this trifling sum were remitted, it would not go into the pockets of the ryots, who hand over their cattle to professional graziers (Lambadis), at a fixed sum per head of cattle, and leave it to the Lambadis to take the cattle where they will, and to pay whatever dues are necessary to the Government or to others. Even if the concession of free grazing for animals of this class were considered desirable, there is the further difficulty of differentiating by any Government agency between agricultural and other cattle. A definite attempt to carry out such a differentiation in order to grant grazing at special rates or even free for animals of this class was made in the years between 1890 and 1895. It failed; and ryots were then allowed grazing at reduced rates for privileged cattle, one animal for so many acres of holding. This too had to be given up on the ground that it involved endless trouble besides affording opportunities for extortion, and endless complaints. The only two Collectors who recommended a continuance of the experiment did so not on the ground that the reduction of the fee was of any importance. They admitted that the advantages conferred on the ryots by the privilege were not great, while the extra labour involved was considerable. The only way in which it appears possible to carry out this differentiation with success is to levy a fee not only on the cattle which visit the forest, but on all cattle in the village. If this be done, there is no difficulty in levying fees at reduced rates for certain classes of cattle, or in exempting them altogether. This is the practice in some of the zamindaries in the Presidency, and in Government villages in some other provinces. But it must be noted that in almost every case where this is done the cattle owners have to pay for their grazing not only in what would be classed as reserved forests in this Presidency but in very large areas of what would undoubtedly here be unreserved, and therefore open to free grazing. The Committee have, therefore, come to the conclusion that the plough bulls are not, as a rule, sent to the forest at all, and that, if they are, they require such specially advantageous treatment that they should be made to pay for it at least as much as is levied on all other cattle; and that any attempt to differentiate between the animals by Government agency will result only in additional harassment and extortion, with very little compensatory advantage.

G.O. Mis. No. 1712, Revenue dated 30th April 1895.

10. As regards local cattle there is a decided opinion, shared by almost every ryot witness examined, that local cattle have the first claim on the reserves—local cattle meaning the cattle of the village or villages within the limits of which the reserve is situated or which it adjoins. This was realised by the Board of Revenue as long ago as 1895, which then observed (in Board's Proceedings, Forest, No. 66, dated 4th February 1895), that when the District Forest Officer had fixed the number of cattle for which a reserve could provide grazing, the first claim on the limited number of permits lay with the ryots of the village or villages, within which the reserve was situated. An examination of the figures showing the number of cattle in any district or taluk in the Presidency would show that there is not room in the reserves for any but a very small portion of the total number of cattle. And there is ample evidence before the Committee that even if the concession of free grazing for all cattle were granted it would not be availed of, except in the case of migratory cattle, whose wanderings will be described later, by any but the cattle of the adjoining villages. But if the grazing is to be limited, a point which we shall discuss later, and the local cattle, as thus defined, are to have preference over all other village cattle, including those which have been grazing in the reserve for the last thirty years, it does not appear to the Committee after careful consideration to be equitable that they should be given the further preferential advantage of obtaining this grazing, which will be enormously enhanced in value by limitation, for nothing, at the expense of the general taxpayer.

Free grazing for local cattle.

11. Finally, it would appear to the Committee that, if, as they hope may be possible, the local villagers are to be given any privileges and responsibilities in connection with the grazing in the reserves included in their village limits, it is of the utmost importance that they should realise the value of these privileges and the importance of these responsibilities. The Committee are convinced, especially in the light of the manner in which the present unreserves, which are open to free grazing, have been treated, that it will be impossible to make the ryots, appreciate the value of their privileges unless they have to pay for them; and that the existence of a fee, which might be enhanced or reduced as a punishment or as a reward, will be, as has been found in Bombay, a most useful means of inducing the ryots to realise their responsibilities.

General grievances complained of.

12. The Committee have now to consider the other grievances which have been brought to their notice in the course of their enquiry. How deeply these grievances are felt was obvious to the Committee from the very beginning of their tour. Hundreds of ryots travelled over distances up to fifty or sixty miles, and waited for days in the hopes of obtaining a hearing. On the march and in camp the Committee were waylaid by anxious ryots, begging them to turn aside to see the particular difficulties under which they were labouring. It is true that if the Committee did visit the desired spot it sometimes happened that the alleged grievance was found to be imaginary. But still it was very often real and the fact remains that, unless there had been very deep feeling, the ryots would not have taken so much trouble to come in person in such large numbers, and from such great distances to state their difficulties. A perusal of Government Orders or Board's Proceedings on forest matters, the records of the tours made by various Governors in the Presidency, and the questions in the Legislative Council or Resolutions in various Conferences or Congresses, all tell the same story. Notwithstanding the various concessions which have been made by insisting on the reserves being over a certain size or at a certain distance from the villages, notwithstanding repeated directions to the Forest Department not to harass the people of the country, the evidence received during the tours of the Committee showed that the Forest Department is more unpopular than any department of the Government. The continually increasing number of prosecutions for infringement of the Forest law and the increase in the sum realized as fines and compounding fees, all tend to show that the application of the Forest laws is still resented and resisted by the ryot population.

13. The main grievances which were represented are connected either with the selection of reserves, and the plans and rules for working them, or with the methods adopted for carrying out the orders thus laid down. In nearly every district visited complaints were made of the proximity of the reserves to the villages or to cultivation, of tracts converted into reserves which contain nothing but black rocks and prickly-pear, of tortuous boundaries, of boundaries so aligned that it was impossible for the cultivator to reach his fields or to take his cattle to water without trespass, of access denied to temples, of rights of way so narrow that it was impossible to prevent animals from trespassing into the forest, of closure of reserves to grazing planned so badly that villagers were deprived of all grazing whatever, of areas closed to grazing so badly demarcated that the owner of cattle was unable to tell whether he was in the closed area or not, and of whole herds of cattle, sheep and goats given up on account of reservation. Bitter complaints were made of the impounding of cattle whether they trespassed into the reserve or not, of the impounding of whole herds of cattle which were being grazed on permits because one or two animals, young ones just born perhaps, were found in the herd without permit; of the impounding of cattle which were known to be grazed on permit, simply because the herd boy had forgotten to bring the permit with him to the reserve, or was absent for a few minutes from the herd; of the impounding of cattle which merely stepped over the boundary into the reserve to rest; or of the impounding of whole herds of cattle travelling along a narrow right of way because one or two of the animals strayed over the border. It was complained that in almost every case, in addition to the impounding, an extra punishment in the shape of a compounding fee, was imposed after an enquiry made only by a forest subordinate, and the fee thus levied was said to be so heavy as to result in the sale of herds of cattle. Even if the

accused elected to go before a Magistrate, the Magistracy were said to be so much afraid of the Forest officers that the fine imposed was invariably heavier than the compounding fee fixed by the Forest officer. Moreover, the only evidence for the prosecution was as a rule that of the forest subordinate who is at the bottom of all the trouble. Nor, if the evidence of the villagers is to be believed, is this all. With the exercise of every precaution in the way of preventing stray animals from trespassing or of invariably carrying the permit, unless a fee is paid to the watcher or the guard the impounding and compounding or prosecution still goes on. Cattle grazing on patta lands and on unreserves, cattle grazing in open reserves with permits, are impounded on the plea that they have been in the reserves or have trespassed into closed areas. Innocent persons bringing fuel or leaf manure from private or unreserved lands are prosecuted for having stolen it from the reserve. Unless the guard and the watcher are satisfied, everything done is an offence till satisfaction is given. In fact, such a thing as the wilful commission of a forest offence is unknown. They are all trumped up by the forest subordinates in return for failure to pay them what they consider their due. In one or two cases, however, villagers admitted quite frankly that they had paid the guard and the watcher, and having so paid, did what they liked in the forest. Others admitted it by implication. "I have arranged that they do not impound" said one substantial ryot.

14. The Committee soon found that though a good deal of this was true, there was much to be said on the other side. The rule that no reserve boundary should be within half a mile of a village has been in existence for some years, and is deviated from only for special reasons. Numerous cases came under the notice of the Committee where a conservancy boundary had been allowed as soon as the fact of the reserve line being too near the village had been brought to the notice of the Collector. It is true that cultivated fields in many cases immediately adjoin the reserves, but in a large proportion of these cases it is the cultivation which has moved up to the reserve line and not the reserve line up to the cultivation. The growth on some of the reserves may be scanty, and the Committee will have recommendations to make later in regard to these areas, but the contrast between reserves and unreserves generally is, as has already been noted, most marked. The boundaries of the reserve are in many places, especially in the Madura district, admirably demarcated and cleared, and the felled coupes have in most districts all been fenced. In Anantapur a large number of the reserves are surrounded by a low wall, a system which from the excellent results obtained might well be extended elsewhere. If regeneration is to take place at all closure to grazing after felling is a necessary evil, but orders have now been given that, when areas have been closed to grazing, red sign boards should be set up to ensure that even graziers from a distance shall know exactly how far their cattle may go. It has long been laid down by Government that simple trespass is not to be looked upon as an offence and it never is, so that the villagers who stated that they were denied access to their temples had only to state the fact to the authorities to obtain relief. As a matter of fact there was no authenticated case of such denial. In nearly every case where the ryots complained that they had been compelled to dispose of their cattle, sheep and goats on account of reservation, the village accounts showed a large increase in the number of animals. It is possible that these accounts may not be dependable for absolute accuracy, but the village officers over so wide a field of country could have no possible object in maintaining false statistics which invariably told the same story. In one village in Madura, where it was said there were no goats left, the village account showed a rise in recent years from 3 to 1,300. In another village, in Guntūr, cattle, which were said to have perished from inanition, had risen from 300 to 900—a fact which might perhaps explain the inanition. In a very large number of cases where the cattle were said to have no place to graze, the area of unreserves was found to be hundreds, or even thousands of acres. Compounding fees may sometimes be high and cases of impounding may be numerous, but they are certainly not sufficiently deterrent to prevent forest offences. That such offences are never wilfully committed is of course an absurdity. The Committee themselves saw numerous remains of illicit cutting, and marks of illicit grazing. They were actually able to detect a case of cattle illicitly grazing in Penukonda closed reserve. The forest subordinates may be hard upon the villagers, but they themselves have no easy task in some places if they seek to do their duty in the face of a sometimes violent and lawless opposition. Murders of forest guards and watchers are by no means unknown incidents.

15. But after making every allowance for exaggeration and for untruth, the Committee are unanimously agreed that valid reasons do exist for the deep-seated dissatisfaction which prevails, and that most of the alleged grievances are very often true. Apart from some points of comparatively minor importance, which will be discussed later on, the chief real grievances are undoubtedly due to the insufficiently supervised contact of the minor forest subordinates with the rural population. It is the guard or the watcher who, as a rule, detects forest offences, impounds cattle, and checks permits. When prosecution is necessary it is on his evidence that the conviction of the accused depends. He is brought into daily contact with the villagers, and has therefore, unlimited opportunities for extortion. When it is considered that the average area of reserved forest which a forest guard on Rs. 8 to Rs. 12 a month has to protect, is as much as 16 square miles, that he is expected to prevent illicit grazing and illicit cutting over the whole of this area with no other assistance than that of a few watchers, temporary servants on Rs. 6 a month, in the face of a population which, so far from assisting him in the work of conservation, does all in its power to prevent him from doing his work and to prevent him from remaining honest, it is not surprising that forest guards, unless they are more than human, frequently give way to temptation and accept the bribes that are so freely offered to them. Once they have given way their thirst for illegal gratifications increases and they are ready to compel payment by any means they can devise. It is admitted on all hands that the upper subordinates of the Forest Department are as a class quite the equals in reliability and in honesty of their compeers in other departments. But the evidence of official and non-official witnesses alike is overwhelming that the lower subordniates are peculiarly corrupt. The one department which appears at one time to have rivalled the Forest Department in unpopularity is the Salt Department, which, like the Forest Department, is concerned with a commodity of comparatively small value in itself but an article for daily use and consumption. Apart from the reduction in the duty on salt, the reasons why the lower officials of the Salt Department do not incur to the same extent as the forest subordinates the odium of the people are probably two. In the first place enquiries into offences by the Salt Department are invariably conducted, before prosecution, by an officer drawing a salary of at least Rs. 125 a month, the duties of peons who correspond to the forest guards being mostly of a preventive character, and being performed under much closer supervision than the staff of the Forest Department permits of. And in the second place the Salt Department, supported by the Government, pursued its policy of suppression of salt crime with such unrelenting vigour that the game became no longer worth the candle. Forest crime was never tackled with the same vigour and where the chances of detection are so small (in the opinion of forest officers, not one case in twenty is detected), the people are prepared to run the risk of punishment for some immediate gain, and when the unexpected happens and punishment ensues they resent it all the more. It is quite possible that if the Government had determined that, whatever the risk of unpopularity and whatever the cost in the way of establishment, forest crime should be put down, illicit grazing and illicit removal of forest produce might have become as rare an offence as the manufacture of earth salt now is. But this has not been the case. On the contrary the Government have repeatedly laid down that they cannot too strongly condemn any attempt unnecessarily to harass the people by the indiscriminate application of the penal clauses of the forest law. And so the sore remains open, and the forest subordinate continues to be a thorn in the side of the rural population. The Committee feel strongly that the remedy for most of the forest grievances lies in the reduction to a minimum of the contact between the forest subordinate and the villager, and to this end they have devoted their most earnest consideration.

Grievances real and chiefly due to contact of forest subordinates with rural population.

16. Before, however, the Committee proceed to consider any method of minimising the contact of the forest subordinate with the people, it seems desirable to give as briefly as possible the gist of the orders of Government which bear on the question of selection and management of reserves, especially reserves in the vicinity of villages. The history of the question was reviewed by the Government of Madras, and their policy definitely laid down in G.O. No. 844, Revenue, of 1890. That

Summary of Government Orders on the subject of reserves in the neighbourhood of villages.

policy may be broadly stated as follows. Instead of dividing the land at the disposal of Government, as appears to have been done in other Provinces, into reserved forests, protected forests, and unreserves, or again into forest proper, fodder reserves or fuel and fodder reserves, and pastures, or again into forests the preservation of which is essential on climatic or physical grounds, forests which afford a supply of valuable timber, minor forests, and pastures, the Madras Government after mature consideration divided the land at their disposal into two classes only, reserved forests and unreserved lands, and within one of these two classes all land at the disposal of Government now falls. Before this decision had been arrived at, an effort had been made in every district to constitute a third category of "village forests", sufficient for the supply of the wants of each village. But the effort ended in failure.

B.P. No. 169/Forest 30, dated 21st January 1886.

Mr. Galton, the Collector of Bellary, who gave the death blow to village forests by his "Bellary Scheme", maintained that it would be impossible in a dry district like Bellary to obtain suitable areas in each village, and, even if they were found, it would be impossible to guard effectually a large number of small blocks, and that it would therefore be preferable to select a few large blocks, sufficient to provide on the whole an area equal to 100 acres for each village in the taluk. This area should be constituted into reserved land, or better still reserved forests, so that the claims or rights of villagers should be finally settled once for all. All other lands in the district were to be left unreserved, and the customary rights and privileges of the villagers, with a very few unimportant restrictions as to sale and as to conservancy of classified trees, were to be maintained intact. The Board of Revenue agreed with the Collector that this scheme should be accepted for his district and ultimately, on the report of other Collectors that the experiment of village forests had been a failure in their districts, recommended that this Bellary scheme should be extended to all districts. The idea of village forests was therefore finally abandoned in 1890. Up till then the areas selected for reserved forest proper appear to have been principally what may be called major forests—forests which are of climatic value, or useful for the supply of large timber, or for the supply of fuel for the railway for manufacturers or for the population of large towns. It was now decided by Government that a sufficient area should be taken up in each taluk, where this had not been done already, to furnish the estimated requirements of the taluk in firewood, leaves and small timber, and to provide grazing for all cattle necessary for agricultural and domestic purposes. If necessary, more lands were to be taken up and conserved, and the natural growth supplemented by plantation. All these lands were to be constituted reserved forests under the Act. But it could not be too strongly affirmed that the chief object of the reserved forests throughout the country was to be the supply of fuel, pasture, small timber and leaves, for manure and litter. Grazing and the removal of forest produce was not to be free, owing to the necessary expenditure involved in conservation and improvement, but agricultural and domestic cattle were to be admitted at half rates, or, if Collectors thought it necessary, free. The result of these orders was a considerable extension of reservation, and some of the lands then reserved were not such, as the Committee have seen for themselves, as were likely without impossibly tedious and extensive measures of reafforestation ever to be of any value for any purpose except rather inferior grazing.

Difference between the policy adopted in Madras and in other provinces.

17. The Policy of the Madras Government as thus laid down, differs very materially from that adopted in other Provinces. In most of these Provinces it was decided, and it was recommended by the Inspector-General of Forests in his suggested rules to the Government of Madras, that all land at the disposal of Government should be brought under some sort of control. This was expressed very strongly in a Resolution of the Government of India, dated 1894, "when the Settlement is ryotwari every survey number or field which is unoccupied or unassigned is in the possession of and at the disposal of Government; and trespass upon it is *prima facie* forbidden." In any consideration, therefore, of the relative generosity of the Forest Policy of the Government of Madras with that of other Provinces in the matter of grazing or privileges or in the matter of action for trespass, it is

G.O. No. 889, Revenue, dated 19th December 1894.

necessary to remember the enormous area of unreserves which have been left absolutely free to the people in Madras but which in other Provinces would have been classed as protected forests or pasture reserves, and on which a charge for grazing would certainly have been made even if no other restrictions were imposed. A second difference was that in Madras the whole of the area brought under control was to be managed by the Forest Department. It was to be managed in the interests of the rural population, but they were to have nothing whatever to do with the actual management. The Madras Government, finding that they could not hope to conserve the grazing ground of each village, were determined that enough land to meet the requirements of each taluk should be well and strictly managed, and the villagers left to work their will upon the rest. Thirdly no recognition was made by the Madras Government of the primary interest in and opportunities for assisting in the conservation or destruction of the forest adjoining their village, which was possessed by the inhabitants of the villages within whose boundaries the forest was situated. Enough land to meet their immediate requirements was to be left unreserved in each village where possible, and if they chose to denude it, or to take it up for cultivation, they were to be left with no more and no less interest in the adjoining forest than the inhabitants of more distant villages in the same taluk. The Government of Madras were doubtless able to foresee that the result of leaving the unreserved lands throughout the Presidency to the villagers, not only without outside control, but without any powers to control themselves, might well result in the gradual or rapid denudation of the tree growth, and even of the grass in this area; that consequently the people would be compelled to rely more and more for their supplies upon the reserved forests; and that it was therefore only to be expected that the rigid conservation of the latter areas might give rise to discontent. But they were prepared to face this. "The Government cannot neglect the important duty of improving and protecting the grazing grounds and the sources of supply of timber and fuel out of a timid consideration for privileges which have been the source of so much waste and injury in the past." That the action of the low-paid subordinates in protecting the forest might give rise to resentment among the people was prominently brought to notice by the Government of India in 1892 and 1894. "It is hardly necessary to state" said the Government of India in 1892 "that the system of management of pastures should be such as to exclude as far as possible all interference on the part of subordinate officers." To this the Madras Government replied that "it is clearly impracticable to prevent interference by subordinate officials if the supervision of these areas is to be maintained by the Forest Department." And again in 1894, when the Government of India suggested that the objections to direct management are reduced to a minimum or altogether avoided when the management of village grazing grounds is left in the hands of resident cultivators or of representatives from among them, the Madras Government replied that "if it is desirable to protect any area at all it is necessary to reserve it absolutely," and that the experiment of placing the management and control of grazing areas in the hands of village communities had been tried already and had failed.

G.O. Mis. No. 3277, *Revenue, dated* 19*th July* 1892.

G.O. No. 889, *Revenue, dated* 19*th December* 1894.

18. It is necessary to remember that, though it was intended that the lands thus reserved should be sufficient to supply fuel and timber for the whole of the ryot population of the taluk, it was not intended that sufficient grazing should be supplied for all animals in the taluk. Agricultural and domestic cattle were to have first claim on the reserve. "There will be in every village a considerable area of unoccupied unreserved lands and this will afford pasturage for the surplus animals if there is no room for them in the reserves."

Modifications of Government policy.

19. It was not, however, found possible to carry out this policy in its entirety. In the first place, as had already been seen, the attempt to discriminate by Government agency between agricultural and domestic and other cattle or between privileged and non-privileged cattle proved a failure; and for some years the grazing of any and all cattle for which their owners care to pay a fee, quite apart from the possibility of the reserve, has been permitted. In the second place, in pursuance of the

orders of 1890, more land was taken up than it was possible with the agency and money available to protect and still less to improve. The re-afforestation of a barren hill area takes so long a time and requires such strict protection that in a large number of instances either nothing was done or the measures which were taken proved abortive. Nor in the opinion of the Committee would such attempts generally have any chance of success without absolute closure and protection for so long a time that they would not be worth the trouble expense and vexation involved. There can be no doubt that some of these abortive and half-hearted endeavours at improvement have given large opportunity to the scoffer and not unjustifiable grounds for dissatisfaction to the villagers. In the third place the resolute policy of reserving absolutely the areas taken up has not been maintained in practice. General orders have been given that it is undesirable that the Forest Department should exercise the strict supervision over these minor areas which is required in the case of timber growing or climatic forests, and that the Government cannot too strongly condemn any tendency unnecessarily to harass the people of the country by the application of the penal clauses of the Forest Law. But, as was shown in discussing the relative popularity of the Forest and Salt Departments, lax supervision is, if anything, more galling in the long run than supervision strictly enforced. And, if the people refuse to obey the Forest Law, it is difficult to see what course is left to the Forest officer but to apply the penalties of the law. Even if the Forest officer by fixing lenient compounding fees or by refraining from resorting to prosecution may be able to discriminate between grave and wilful breaches of the law, and such minor offences as accidental trespass, the forest guard cannot be expected, much less trusted, to discriminate between wilful and accidental offences when he finds cattle actually in the forest. It is he who has to impound the cattle, and if the question of release were left with him the temptation to let go the cattle of the wealthy ryot and to impound the cattle of his poorer neighbour would be too great for a man of his class and antecedents paid on the scale on which he is paid.

G.O. No. 889, *Revenue*, *dated* 19*th December* 1894.

Forest Administration Report, 1891–92.

Results.

20. The approved policy has been as outlined above, and the now visible results are that the unreserves left for the use of the villagers have been or are rapidly becoming denuded. The somewhat shadowy control exercised over them by the Revenue Department and the village officer has been inadequate to arrest the process. The more sensible of the ryots in some parts see and regret this undesirable deterioration and would be glad to arrest it. In Nellore and parts of Guntur and in one village of Anantapur they have actually taken salutary, though unauthorised, measures to do so, but what is every one's business is no one's business, and most of the unreserves of the Presidency are rapidly becoming mere stony wastes over-grown with prickly-pear and euphorbia. In consequence pressure upon the reserve has increased, and, in spite of the intentions of the Government to the contrary, all reserves whether containing timber of value or whether mere scrub grazing grounds have in the matter of protection been treated on exactly the same system.

Policies now open.

21. The Committee are, therefore, firmly convinced that there are only two alternative policies open to the Government. One other policy suggested itself to the Committee only to be discarded—to disafforest a large proportion of the areas now reserved and to concentrate the energies of the Forest Department in rigidly reserving what is left. With the example of the unreserves before them the Committee are strongly opposed to leaving any useful portion of the present area without any control at all. The first alternative left is so to increase the staff and, if necessary, to enhance punishment that forest crime shall once for all be put down. The rigorous enforcement of such a policy would have involved great unpopularity at any time, but now that for many years it has been the policy of Government only so far to enforce the Forest Law as not to unnecessarily harass the people, the universal application of any such resolute policy is out of the question. The other alternative, which is the one the Committee would recommend, is, wherever possible, to enlist the population of the villages adjoining the forest and especially of the villages within the boundaries of which the forest is situated on the side of law and order by frankly

recognising their special interests in these particular forests. If such a policy is to be adopted, the first step is clearly to classify the forests according to their nature and situation and the objects which they are intended to serve. It is obvious that the interests of the villagers in and their capacity for taking part in the management of such forests as the Nilambur teak plantations and such forests as those at Kuderu and Jakkalacheruvu in the Anantapur district are wide apart as the poles.

Necessity for limitation.

22. The Committee are still further assured of the need for a different treatment of the various classes of forests by the difficulty which has been found in attempting to enforce any system of limitation of forest grazing. That such a limitation to the possibility of the forests is necessary not only in the interest of forest conservancy, but also in those of the ryots who graze their cattle in the forests, has long been recognised by Government though no practical method of enforcing it has yet been devised. The Committee had ample evidence before them of the necessity of such a limitation. They have had the advantage of perusing an advance copy of the report on the cattle survey of the Presidency made by Mr. Sampson, Deputy Director of Agriculture. The conclusions as regards forest grazing therein arrived at were clearly confirmed by what the Committee heard and saw throughout the Presidency. Large herds of worthless cattle are kept, for manure no doubt, but often just as much for the sake of prestige. No care is taken in the breeding of these cattle, which is as little controlled as that of wild animals. Good cows are covered by worthless undersized bulls and even good bulls are allowed to waste their energies on a number of absolutely worthless cows. The consequences of this want of method and care in breeding are seen in the fact that numbers of ryots admitted that although they maintain herds of cows, a hundred or more in number, they are compelled to buy their working cattle from one of the few districts such as Guntūr, Nellore or Coimbatore where some attempt at breeding on reasonable lines is made. When asked for what purpose their own useless cattle are maintained the witnesses usually replied that it was for their manure. But when it is considered that half the manure is wasted in the forest lands or porambokes of the village it is not too much to say that even for manuring purposes alone one pair of good animals kept at home and well fed would be worth fifteen or twenty of these half-starved, undersized, and useless creatures, which have never done a day's work, which seldom breed and, when they do, produce something as degraded as themselves. Thoughtful witnesses have attributed this regrettable state of affairs to the religious prohibition against the slaughter of cattle. The Committee respect and would not wish to criticise this prohibition, but they do not think that it is the only or even the principal cause of the evil. They attribute the evil to the careless, thoughtless and improvident system which ensures or allows the indefinite multiplication of these useless animals. There would be no need to destroy them if they were not permitted to come into existence. Unfortunately these are now the very animals of which so many are sent to the neighbouring forests and sent in such numbers that the ryots do not care to send their valuable agricultural cattle to the reserve, firstly because there is no grass for them and secondly from fear of disease. It is a notable and conspicuous feature of the grazing conditions of the Presidency that the herds of inferior cattle, here referred to, graze as a rule only within such a distance from their village that they can go to and return from their grazing grounds within the day. They are seldom taken to distant forests. Probably they are not worth the trouble and expense.

Migratory cattle.

23. Besides this strictly local grazing there is in certain localities a very regular and defined migration of cattle to the more distant forests at certain seasons. These are mostly cattle of more value, generally herds of cows with some working cattle for which there is no work at the season. Thus from the eastern taluks of Nellore these herds migrate to the western forests of the district during the monsoon season, when there is grass in the forests and when the village lands are under crop. Many of these herds go to "Kanchas" which their owners take yearly for a lump payment. Others are grazed on the ordinary permit system at a fee per head. From the deltas of Guntūr and Kistna there is a similar migration to the Eastern Nallamalais of Kurnool for some six months of the year. Similarly cattle from the eastern districts go as far as to the Lankamalai and Palkonda hills in Cuddapah. All these

cattle are kept in pens in the forest and there is little of the friction between their herds-men and the Forest subordinates which occurs in the neighbourhood of the villages nor as a rule is the incidence of this migratory grazing greater than the forest can well bear. There is little calling for reform in connection with this form of grazing, unless, as appears improbable, the "Kancha" system of Nellore can be extended.

Demand for limitation in Nellore.

24. In Nellore, including Ongole, where agricultural opinion in the matter of cattle breeding is far more advanced than in the other districts visited by the Committee, the first complaint put forward was that the number of cattle admitted into the Forest was so large, and the rotation of grazing was so badly managed, or rather not managed at all, that the grazing in the open forest was of no value whatever for agricultural cattle. The Committee could find little trace of such advanced ideas in the other districts which they visited, except in Guntūr where it was stated that if the villagers were given control of the grazing they would admit the ploughing bullocks first and keep out the more useless animals till the wants of the ploughing bullocks had been satisfied. But the Committee hope that the proposals now to be put forward by them may at least give the villagers an opportunity of making the local grazing available for the better rather than for the inferior cattle and thus discouraging the multiplication of the latter and eventually may tend to the spread of the more sensible views upon the subject held in Nellore, where it is well recognised that no forest should be grazed above its possibility.

Grazing possibility different for different types of forests.

25. But the grazing possibility of a forest is a term of very varying import. If a forest is intended chiefly or solely as a grazing area, the number of animals which can safely be admitted is absolutely different from the number which should be allowed to graze if the forest is chiefly intended for the supply of fuel or timber. As observed by Dr. Brandis, a certain amount of tree growth is an advantage on a grazing ground. In seasons of drought pasture is available in the forest lands when there is none in the open grazing grounds. But there can be no doubt that the dense canopy of shade, which it is the aim of every sylviculturist to produce, is so far from an advantage to the grazier that in the end if it is successfully established it may destroy the grass altogether. On the other hand the Committee had ample opportunity of seeing the harm done to a fuel forest by permitting excessive grazing of cattle, quite apart from sheep and goats. In the Bollapalli valley in Guntūr district, what should be fine Hardwickia forest is, as was seen by the Committee and was admitted by the villagers, so lopped for the browsing of cattle that nothing but stunted pollards are left. Numerous other instances of the kind could be quoted from other districts.

Classification of the forests necessary.

26. On all grounds therefore the Committee are convinced that classification of the forests is necessary as a first step to any decision as to the method of their management. The Committee cannot of course attempt to carry out this classification in detail even for the districts which they have visited, still less for the whole Presidency. All that they can do is to suggest the general line on which the classification should proceed, the method of treatment of each class of forest, the agency by which each should be managed, and the method and agency by which the classification might be most simply and advantageously carried out.

Classes of forests.

27. The Committee would recommend that the present reserved forests be divided into the following six classes:—

(1) Those reserves which must be preserved for climatic purposes and for the protection of water-sources as well as those reserves which are not in close contact with villages and cultivation. These forests should be absolutely managed by the Forest Department as they are at present. The Committee have not actually inspected any forests of this type but are aware of many.

(2) Those reserves which, although not remote from villages and from cultivation, are valuable as producers of timber or fuel, and which are, or are capable of being intensively worked for this purpose, and in which grazing is altogether a secondary product. The principal forests of this type which were inspected by the Committee

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are the forests round Ayyalur and Vemburili in Madura district. Not only are these forests commercially valuable assets to the State but the town of Madura is largely dependent upon them for its fuel supply. The best method of extracting this fuel and of ensuring that the local rural population is supplied as well as large towns will be discussed later on in the portion of this report which deals with fuel supply. It is sufficient at present to say that the continuance and improvement of these forests for the purposes which they serve are incompatible with their use as grazing grounds except to a strictly limited extent. No one who has seen the damage done to these valuable forests by the present practice of allowing an unlimited number of cattle to graze in them, except in the portions which are closed for a period after felling, would wish to continue such an impossible system. Moreover, owing to the density of the forest growth, these areas produce but little grass and in consequence the cattle which resort to them are of the most degraded description.

The Committee would not exclude from either of the above classes those forests which, though not yet workable, are under regeneration and are likely, with adequate protection, to become in the near future valuable forests of either of the above two classes. The Committee inspected a forest of this kind—the Kottakota reserve near Bukkapatnam in the Anantapur district. In this forest, there is an excellent growth of young teak, *Hardwickia binata*, *Anogeissus latifolia* and other valuable trees. The forest is not yet ready to be worked, but if protected from fire, from overgrazing, and from illicit cutting, there can be no doubt that such a forest will within a comparatively short time be extremely valuable and that its improvement is too important to the community as a whole to be sacrificed to the more local wants of the adjoining villages. The wants of the villages are also amply met from the unreserves and from neighbouring forests of less value, in this case the Vengalammacheruvu reserve, which will fall into one of the other classes of forests to be considered later on. In this class, the Committee would also include the Penukonda hill reserve close to Penukonda town in Anantapur district This reserve has been well fenced for some years and as a result the hill is already well clothed with thorny trees with some good species coming up in it here and there Here also there are ample unreserves, and a large area of reserved forest which should more than supply the wants of the cattle of the surrounding villages. On the other hand a word of warning is necessary against the idea that any forest which is technically under regeneration should necessarily be placed in one of these two classes. There are in the districts visited by the Committee and in others very many reserves which are officially under regeneration but in which, after years of effort, little has been effected, and which are unlikely to be of practical value as sources of forest produce without an expenditure of time and money and an amount of irritation and annoyance to the local population which are certainly incommensurate with the results likely to be attained. Only reserves which are, after full consideration of all these factors, worth regeneration from a common sense point of view, should be classified as such.

(3) Fuel plantations, especially the Casuarina plantations on the coast, including lands taken up for that purpose and not yet planted. The Committee had an opportunity of inspecting a number of these plantations around Bapatla in the district of Guntūr. The conditions of these did not, the Committee believe, differ in any way from similar plantations and lands in other coast districts.

(4) Those reserves which adjoin villages and which, while useful for grazing, contain tree-growth which it is necessary to preserve for working in the near future, or which are already worked to a small extent for rural supply. The Committee have found great difficulty in defining this class of forests, which is intermediate between the valuable timber or fuel forests of class 2, and the forests treated as class 5 below in which grazing is the chief item to be considered. It is intended to comprise those reserves which contain too much forest-growth and of too good quality to be treated as mere grazing grounds. Some of them are worked for local supply and some probably soon will be. At the same time the grazing in them is of importance and of some value and it is necessary to manage them both as grazing grounds and as producers of forest produce. Among the reserves which were inspected by the Committee they would place in this class the forests adjoining Kavali town in Nellore, and the Gudalur forest in Chingleput.

(5) Those reserves which are so much more useful for grazing than for any other object that for practical purposes grazing alone need be considered.

This class of forest is common throughout the Presidency. It includes most of the extensions taken up in pursuance of the orders of 1890. It includes all the scrub jungles adjoining or close to cultivation which at present are not under working, or in the few cases in which they are worked, are not worth the trouble. Some of them contain a little growth useful as fuel, but not such as can be advantageously exploited in view of the smallness of the local demand and the distance from the markets. Most of them now yield no revenue except from grazing fees and a trifle from minor produce. The only justification for their reservation is their preservation as grazing grounds and as such and nothing else they should be treated.

(6) Those reserves which are so barren or so deteriorated that they are worthless for any purpose, even for grazing.

This will not be a numerous class, since almost all waste land is useful, or can be made useful, for grazing but there are a few such places.

Method of treatment of each class of forest.

28. The method of treatment of each class as regards grazing and the agency by which they are to be managed has now to be considered. As regards the first class the Committee have no special recommendations to make except a few general proposals, to be discussed later, which will apply to all forests left under the control of the Department. Forests of this class must clearly continue to be managed departmentally. The question of what cattle are to be admitted and in what numbers must be settled by the Department, with reference principally to considerations of forestry. It is in this class of forests, as a rule, that grazing is found for the migratory cattle from the coast whose wanderings have been described in paragraph 23.

29. The valuable fuel and timber forests of the second class must also be left under the control of the Department. The main object of the management of forests of this class must clearly be the preservation and encouragement of the tree-growth, only so much grazing being allowed as is compatible with sylvicultural considerations. The limited number of cattle which are to be admitted to each reserve or to each block of a reserve must therefore be determined by the Forest Officer. But, as these forests adjoin villages or cultivation, the Committee consider that the Revenue Divisional Officer should be consulted, in order that the views and needs of the adjoining ryot population may be taken into account when the limit is decided upon. His opinion will also be particularly valuable in determining how many of this limited number of permits should be allotted to each village. In deciding this point the Committee consider that preference should be given to the villages adjoining the forest and especially to the villages within the boundaries of which the reserve is situated. As a rule the grazing will be much enhanced in value by this limitation, and in the opinion of many competent authorities there is no reason why the State should not obtain a share of this enhanced value by selling the permits to the highest bidder. The Committee however are not prepared to recommend this step, as they consider that great advantages to forest protection and conservancy may be gained by giving preference to the cattle of the local villagers and thus giving the villagers an interest in the adjoining forest. Such preference is also wholly in accordance with rural public opinion. The distribution of the limited number of permits in each village should be made, where it is possible, by a Panchayat of resident cattle-owners.

30. The third class of forests, fuel plantations, should, in the opinion of the Committee, be got rid of altogether as a Government concern. The Forest Department has undoubtedly done great good to the country by starting this valuable industry of growing fuel for the market But the industry is now fully established and, from what the Committee saw and heard, can be carried on more profitably and successfully and with less trouble to the neighbouring ryot population by private individuals than by Government. The private plantations inspected by the Committee are quite as good as, and much better protected than the Government plantations. Considerable areas taken up by Government, ostensibly for plantation, are still sandy wastes. The Committee are therefore strongly of opinion that the only areas of this class which it is necessary for the Government to retain should be such small plots as are needed for carrying out experiments in improved methods of planting, or in the combination of casuarina with trees of other species, or the investigation of methods of stamping out

disease. The areas retained should in all cases be well fenced. Of the remaining area, that already planted should be disposed of as quickly as is possible without incurring serious loss. The area still not planted should be made over to applicants for private exploitation as plantations or be retained as grazing reserves under Class V, and controlled and managed accordingly. The chief consideration to be borne in mind in deciding in which manner any particular land should be disposed of should be the local need for grazing ground and the suitability of the land for planting.

31. The treatment of the fourth class of forests presents peculiar difficulties. On the one hand, the tree-growth is of too great value to be entrusted to the local villagers for their management. On the other hand, the Committee are of opinion that it would be wrong not to extend village control, as far as can safely be done, to this class of forest and that the villagers might well be entrusted with the management of the grazing. The difficulties of combining the management of the tree-growth by the Forest Department with the management of grazing by the villagers have been impressed upon the Committee by experts in the Forest Department. It is maintained that if a forest is to be kept as fuel forest at all, there must be limitation of grazing, and it is too much to expect any panchayat to have either the desire or the requisite influence to enforce limitation of the number of cattle admitted. If a forest is to be worked for fuel scientifically, it is necessary to close the coupes for a series of years after they have been felled. This closure to grazing is always irksome to ryots of the adjoining villages, but much less inconvenience is caused by the closure of one large block than by the closure of a number of small patches all over the reserve. In the latter case the length of the boundaries of the closed area is multiplied, and the chances of the occurrence of accidental trespass are thereby largely increased. Moreover, the greater the length of the boundary, the more difficult it is to protect. If therefore a closed area is to be properly protected and to cause the least possible inconvenience, it will sometimes be necessary to close the whole area comprised within the boundaries of a particular village. But the Committee are strongly of opinion that panchayats, if they are to be successful, should be confined to a single village and should not be appointed for a group of villages. Occasions may therefore not infrequently arise in which the whole of the area allotted to a panchayat for the management of grazing on behalf of the villagers will be closed. The panchayatdars of the neighbouring villages will not admit cattle of other villages into the open area of the reserve, and therefore for a time at all events, the cattle of this particular village will have nowhere to go. The Committee have made every endeavour to give due weight to these considerations, but they are of opinion that on the whole in forests of this class the advantage of entrusting the local population with the management of grazing and thereby giving them an interest in the forest comprised within their village boundary outweigh the disadvantages which have been set forth above. They consider that, if necessary, working plans must be altered so that not more than half the area included in any one village should be closed at one time. They are also of opinion that if the panchayats are willing to undertake the protection of the forest within their village boundaries, they should be encouraged to do so. Such protection, if adequately carried out, should be rewarded either by the free gift of a certain amount of forest produce from the coupes when they are worked, or by a reduction in the amount of grazing fees levied from the villagers. If the villagers are willing to take up protection of these areas, the arguments in favour of closing a large block at one time lose much of their force. There is no doubt that the villagers could, if they chose, look after the fences which will have been established round the felled areas by the Forest Department or by the contractors and could protect the comparatively small closed area within their boundaries. The difficulty in regard to limitation will be met to some extent by the fact that the village panchayat will be given power to exclude all cattle belonging to other villages from the area of forest entrusted to them. This should considerably reduce the number of cattle allowed into any area. But if, in the opinion of the experts, the number of cattle in any village is more than the forest will stand, it will be necessary to fix the limited number which will be allowed to graze. Of what cattle this limited number should consist will be fixed by the panchayat and it will be the duty of the inspecting officers to check the village herd in the forest on occasions and see that the number fixed has not been exceeded. If it be found that the panchayat have seriously failed in their duty, the grazing fee for that village might

be raised for the next year or period of contract, and if the panchayat still prove themselves incapable of preventing the recurrence of offences it must be dissolved and the management of the grazing ground handed back to the Forest Department. The Committee hope that if a few examples of this kind are made the villagers will learn that their interests are involved in the prevention of forest offences.

32. The management of the forests of the fifth class, the grazing grounds may, the Committee consider, be handed over entirely to village panchayats, who should be responsible for the collection of grazing fees, the regulation of the grazing, and the protection of the tree-growth, the departmental guards and watchers being removed. The panchayats might be entrusted not only with the management of the grazing grounds which at present form part of the reserved forests, but also of such unreserved lands in the village as are useful for grazing and are not wanted for any other purpose. These areas should be notified by the Collector under rule 5 of the rules under section 26 of the Forest Act, which rule may, if necessary, be modified for the purpose.

33. The few areas which will fall under class 6 should be disafforested and treated as ordinary unreserved lands at the disposal of Government.

Classification not exhaustive.

34. The Committee cannot hope that the classification which they propose is entirely exhaustive. There may be and quite probably are forests in the districts not visited by the Committee which will not easily fall into any of the above classes. But it should not be difficult to apply to those reserves the general principles on which the Committee's classification is based. As an instance might be mentioned the Babul reserves of Guntur taluk. The soil in those areas is good black-cotton. They are situated in the midst of cultivated lands and are as a rule closed to grazing. The growth of Babul in the particular reserve visited (Lāmu) is only fair and the regeneration in the areas felled is not strikingly successful. The Committee were, however, assured by the Forest officer that the particular reserve inspected is not typical and that in other places the standing crop is much more dense and the regeneration by way of coppice is extremely good and is of particular technical interest as these areas are standard instances throughout India of the successful coppicing of Babul—a point on which considerable doubt has been expressed by experienced Forest officers. These reserves would naturally fall under either class 2 or class 4. But the Committee are very doubtful whether in view of their situation and of their not very large outturn, it is worthwhile to retain the whole of them as forest at all. Parts of these reserves are assessed at Rs. 1–8–0 or Rs. 2 an acre. If they were assigned for cultivation, after being felled, they would bring in a great deal more revenue to the State than they do at present. Their position on the open plain surrounded by cultivation with no natural boundary and no fence makes it particularly difficult for the Forest Department to protect them from wilful trespass and for the ryots to prevent accidental trespass. Whether the whole or only a part of them is retained as reserve, the Committee think it only right and just that these reserves and all other closed reserves in similar situations should be well fenced.

Considerations in regard to panchayat management.

Rejected by Government in 1894.
G.O. No. 844, *Revenue of* 1890.
G.O. No. 889, *Revenue of* 1894.

35. The Committee are aware that in thus proposing that a considerable portion of the present reserved forests should be managed by panchayats, composed of the resident cattle-owners, they are recommending the adoption of a policy which was distinctly rejected by the Government in 1890 and still more definitely refused in 1894. At that time, it was stated "that in the opinion of His Excellency the Governor in Council, the village communities cannot be trusted to have the management and control of their grazing areas. The experiment has been tried in the past and has proved that the grazing rights often become the subject of speculation, and that the produce itself rapidly deteriorated; while the absence of control leads to the formation of factions in each village and to the oppression of that party which chances to be the weaker." Since this was written, however, the grazing grounds have for years been managed solely by the Forest Department, and it cannot be claimed that the results have been altogether desirable. The grazing grounds have not been improved. In many cases they have deteriorated,

while wide-spread discontent has been caused and corruption and demoralisation both of the villagers and the subordinate employees have been rife. The villager has seen his ancestral grazing ground taken up and reserved, has been worried and annoyed for purposes which to him are inscrutable. It is not surprising if he has been unable to see for what purpose these grounds have been reserved unless, as he undoubtedly thinks, for the purpose of extracting rupees from his pocket. On the other hand, the experience gained by the villagers in seeing the denudation of the unreserved areas, and in having to put up with the harassment and exactions of the lower subordinates of the Forest Department will, it is hoped, have tended to teach them wisdom. The fear that if they allow the areas entrusted to them to be denuded, they will once again have to endure the troubles from which an effort is now being made to relieve them, should act as a very useful deterrent.

Previous efforts to establish village forests.

36. Moreover, the Committee have not been able to discover that anything on the lines of the village management which they now suggest has ever been tried in this Presidency. An effort was, it is true, made to establish village forests in every district in the Presidency; but the only place in which they were actually brought into being appears to have been in the Nilgiris where, if these village forests were not successful, the failure of the experiment in conditions so different from those prevailing in the rest of the Presidency cannot be said to be strong evidence that it will not be successful elsewhere. The only other place where anything in the nature of village communal management of forests appears to have had a trial, apart from the recent experiment in Chingleput and Coimbatore, is Nellore district, where village kanchas have long been in existence. From the evidence received in Nellore, the Committee are satisfied that these village kanchas have worked well. Their occasional failures appear to have been due to the bad faith of individuals who have taken a kancha in their own name on behalf of the village and have then abused their opportunity by exacting competitive rates from the village cattle-owners. But the village panchayats in which the Committee would vest the control would be on a different footing. They would be selected in accordance with the wishes of the villagers themselves. They would be removeable in the case of a general complaint and in any event would have only a limited term of office.

Other instances of communal action.

37. The Committee are also aware that when the question of general panchayats was under consideration, it was the opinion of many of those who were in a special position to know the facts that no communal feeling existed in the villages, that even if it had ever existed, it had died out so long ago that any attempt to revive it would involve the creation of a new institution and not the revival of an old one. In the course of their enquiries, however, the Committee have discovered a number of instances of successful communal action for special purposes. The Pethandars of parts of the Northern Circars, who, though they have no official recognition, are still customarily called upon to settle a number of petty disputes and whose decision is generally accepted by the villagers; the Pinapeddas of Anantapur district, who manage the distribution of water and the clearance of irrigation channels so successfully that it is only in very rare instances that official interference is necessary; and the panchayatdars of the co-operative societies over the Presidency who, even in such backward districts as Anantapur, seem able to carry on the business of the societies to the satisfaction of their members; all these instances tend to show that whatever may be the case as regards general village panchayats, the Committee selected by the villagers for a particular purpose can generally carry on the business successfully. It should be noted, however, that in all these cases, the unit of administration is the village and not a group of villages, and the Committee are decidedly of opinion that, though communal feeling exists and is an active force among the inhabitants of individual villages, it cannot be generally expected among a combination of several villages. In Chingleput, and perhaps in other districts also, attempts were made originally to form a group of villages into one co-operative society. In every case, however, which came under the notice of the Committee, the authorities were compelled in the end to divide these societies into separate concerns for each village. The

In such cases the unit is the village.

Committee are confirmed in their opinion by what they have seen and heard of the village forests recently started in Chingleput, and of what they have heard of the complete failure of the Andiyur forest panchayat formed for a group of villages in Coimbatore district. The panchayatdars in Chingleput, where each village has its own separate forest, have resolutely excluded the cattle of other villages from the forest committed to their care. They have punished persons found cutting illicitly by methods which may be illegal but have been effective and were not contested, and though these experiments have not proved much, because so much was given to the panchayat and so little was asked of it, they have at least shown that the villagers will protect their own property or their own charge against others. In Andiyur, on the other hand, the result of forming a panchayat from a number of villages, including a considerable number of officials with a very elaborate set of rules for their guidance seems to be well on the road to complete failure. The Committee have not had the opportunity of visiting Andiyur but the subjoined extracts from a report of the District Forest Officer on the village forest at that place bear out the conclusion above expressed :—

Experiments with village forests in Chingleput and Coimbatore.

I have inspected (on 2nd August 1912) the Andiyur village forest. I thoroughly went over the southern two-thirds of the area and inspected the coupe under working.

I find unregulated fellings everywhere over the area inspected, though fellings are supposed to be located and I am informed that permits are issued only in the coupe. If it is a fact that permits are issued in the coupe, it must be clear that the issuing agency takes no trouble to see that fellings are confined to the coupe ; as, however, fellings are found everywhere and at great distances from the coupe both in head-loads and cart-loads (evidence the many cart-tracks) the presumption that permits are issued in Andiyur and not in the coupe is overwhelming. That is to say, the greatest safeguard to ensure localised felling is not made use of. In order that I might see things as they normally are I gave no notice of my intended inspection ; up to 9-45 a.m. there was no sign of any of the subordinates in the coupe, nor was there a sign of any of them on the direct path back to Andiyur. I saw felling going on in other parts of the forest.

Goats are, by rule made by the panchayat, excluded from the forest. Actually goat-browsing is permitted everywhere. Loppings for goats carpet the ground in many places, while practically no part of the forest seen by me had escaped the exercise of this pernicious practice. My information was that the subordinate staff permitted only the goats of the members of the panchayat to browse. That certain members of the panchayat do make use of their position to their own profit is borne out by statement made to me by the President, who tells me that certain members of the panchayat were recently warned for permitting their goats to be taken into the village forest. It is considered sufficient to " warn " those who may use of their position to commit acts they were particularly appointed to prevent. I believe it to be admitted that goats are inimical to tree-growth, at any rate the panchayat by its own rules has declared those animals barred, and I need not enter into a description of the damage done by goats, beyond reiterating that goats absolutely paralyse reproduction, a young tree once browsed down must be cut back to the roots if it is ever to recover. It is of no advantage to give up the forest to the goat, for the goat will cause the forest to disappear, and eventually the goat must go, when the people will have been injured by the loss of the forest. In addition to the forest generally goats have been, to some extent, allowed into the coupe under felling.

* * * *

The President (who is the Revenue Inspector of Andiyur, V. Krishna Row) informs me that the panchayat " consists of 22 nominated members, they serve willingly, none of them go out to the forest or interest themselves in it, the Revenue Divisional Officer ordered them to do so, they are not going out ".

38. In Chingleput again strong confirmation was received of the view that the unit of area to be handed over to the panchayat should be the area actually included within the village boundaries and not a block arbitrarily assigned. The villages of Karanai and Kunnapattu, together with several other villages, adjoin an area of forest containing about 600 acres ; and instead of dividing the area equally among the surrounding villages, it was decided to exclude all the villages except the two above named within the boundaries of which the forests fell. Nor did the arrangement thus arrived at result in an equal division between these two villages ; two hundred acres were allotted to Kunnapattu and four hundred acres to Karanai. But neither was any complaint received from the surrounding villages about their exclusion; nor from the villagers of Kunnapattu, against

In Chingleput the unit of area is the limit of the village.

their receiving only one-third instead of one-half of the forest. The principle that the area should be divided in accordance with the village boundaries was accepted without a murmur. Throughout the districts visited by the Committee it has been plain that the claim of a village to all that is or was included within its boundary is respected by other villages. These boundaries even where they have been for years included in a reserved forest are well-known and are generally shown on the survey maps.

Danger of oppression and partiality of panchayatdars.

39. One of the most serious dangers which was suggested to the Committee as involved in the system of panchayats was that the panchayat would consist of the wealthier and more powerful men in the village community and that they would use the powers entrusted to them either for their own personal benefit or for the benefit of the more wealthy members of the community to the exclusion of the poorer owners of cattle in the village. The Committee admit that this is a serious risk but it is a risk which they are prepared to take. They propose that in case of any general complaint of unfairness or partiality on the part of the panchayats the Revenue Divisional Officer should have power to remove the panchayat and to call upon the villagers to select another one. They propose as an additional safeguard that the panchayatdars should have to be re-appointed at the end of three years and it is unlikely that they will abuse their powers as above suggested, with the certainty that if they do they will not be appointed again.

The Committee are also aware of the serious risk that in some villages, where two factions exist, the panchayat may get into the hands of a single faction and the grazing ground be managed in the interests of that faction to the exclusion of the members of the other party. Where, however, there are factions there will be less likelihood of any dereliction of duty on the part of the panchayats failing to be brought to notice of the authorities. On the whole the Committee are sanguine, that though there will be failures and though it will be necessary to make a healthy example in the case of such failures, still the system which they advocate, imperfect though it necessarily must be, will be more successful and will cause far less irritation and discontent than the present system of management of the grazing grounds in the Presidency. Protection can hardly in any case be worse than it has been under the regime of the forest subordinate, while in some places, *e.g.*, Nellore district, it will quite certainly be very much better.

Panchayats to be functional, not general.

40. It is now necessary to discuss in greater detail the question of the constitution of a panchayat, of the tasks and duties which should be entrusted to it and of the extent to which it should be controlled and the agency to be employed to control it. The first question which was discussed by the Committee was whether a panchayat should be a functional body, concerned with the forest and grazing grounds alone, or whether the management of the village forests should be entrusted to a general panchayat in case the proposals of the Decentralization Commission that such a general panchayat be appointed should be approved. On the whole the Committee are decidedly in favour of a special panchayat. Any general panchayat will probably include the village school-master, the village astronomer and other non-agriculturists of the same type. The Committee are of opinion that a forest panchayat should generally consist of cattle-owners.

Constitution of panchayats.

41. The constitution of the body which should have power to select it and the rules and regulations under which it should be appointed and should work have next to be considered. In the opinion of the Committee, the most important requisite in all these matters is simplicity. Only so much formality should be allowed as is absolutely necessary. In particular, the Committee would desire to avoid the introduction of ballot boxes, electoral rules and all the paraphernalia of an election into an Indian rural village. The Andiyur Forest panchayat has several printed pages of rules and it maintains formal minutes of its proceedings. In fact it tries to imitate a taluk board or a union, and meanwhile the forest goes to rack and ruin. The selection of a panchayat should be made in the presence of a Tahsildar or a Deputy Tahsildar at an informal meeting of the cattle-owners of the village including owners of sheep, and approved by the Divisional officer. Some witnesses have preferred that the pattadars

or landholders rather than the cattle-owners should be the selecting body. But the Committee consider that all cultivating landholders and practically all resident landholders will be owners of cattle. They do not consider that the absentee clerk in a taluk office who happens to own land in a village should have anything to do in the selection. If he returns to his village and takes up agriculture as his profession or his hobby, he will have a part in the selection of the next panchayat. On the other hand the Committee think it of great importance that the cultivating tenant who, notably in the Chingleput and Madura districts, is a very important figure in agricultural economy should have a share in appointing a panchayat which is to look after the forest where he is to graze his cattle. This he would not have if the holding of a patta were a necessary qualification. There does not seem to be any necessity for laying down any qualifications which should be possessed by a member of the panchayat. The cattle-owners may be left to decide that. It was suggested by some of the witnesses, especially in Anantapur, that the village officers should be compulsorily excluded. The argument brought forward in favour of their exclusion was that some village officers possessed so great an influence that they would dominate a panchayat. Even were this the case, it would seem that this influence would be far better exercised on the side of the panchayat than against it, as it might well be if this village tyrant is excluded. The only exception which the Committee would recommend to the general rule that cattle owners should have a right to select any one they please is that the Revenue Divisional officer should have the power to veto any panchayatdar whose name is submitted to him. This safeguard is necessary to prevent the appointment of some lawless but powerful leader of whom it is possible that the community might be so much afraid that they would elect him though they knew him to be unfit.

Duties of panchayats.

42. The principal duties of the panchayats so constituted should be the following:—

(1) The full management and control of the grazing in the areas entrusted to them. The importance of limiting the number of cattle to the capacity of the ground, of closing certain areas to grazing, especially after rain till the grass is well established, should be impressed upon the panchayatdars; but it does not seem necessary or feasible in the case of grazing grounds (Class V) to lay down any fixed limits or to make any definite rules in the matter, the one exception upon which the Committee would insist, being that the goat should be excluded from reserves entrusted to the panchayats. The Committee have heard and seen much of the goat and of his misdoings in all the districts which they have visited. The damage done by the goat not merely to the tree-growth but also to the grazing was insisted upon by most of the competent agricultural witnesses, especially in the Anantapur district. In this district, all the evidence, even of the most ardent opponents of forest reservation, made an exception against the goat. In other districts, one of the chief reasons alleged for not sending the agricultural cattle to the reserves was that the presence of goats made the grass uneatable. In the few places where an attempt has been made by the villagers themselves to regulate the grazing on the unreserves, the goats are not allowed to browse over the portions reserved for valuable cattle. The Committee considered at length the question of setting apart areas in the reserves for goat browsing. In the end they were convinced by the figures adduced that the only result of throwing open a new area for these destructive animals is an enormous and immediate increase in their number, so that in a short time the tree-growth in this area is destroyed and a demand arises for a fresh area to be thrown open. It will be seen that the Committee recommend that a panchayat should be held responsible that the grazing grounds should not be denuded of their tree-growth. They do not consider it fair to impose this duty upon them unless the goat is to be excluded; nor incidentally do they consider it fair to a Forest officer that he should be compelled to provide browsing for the goat in any area where he is expected to maintain, still less to improve, the tree-growth. If in any locality it is found absolutely necessary to provide for goat browsing the Committee are of opinion that the area to which the goat is to be admitted should be disafforested and made into goat-browsing poramboke. The Committee would not recommend the retention as reserves of any area to which the goat is admitted. Subject to the above restriction the panchayat should have absolute authority to admit or to exclude all or any cattle of their own village

according to their discretion, to limit the number and define the class of animals to be admitted at any time and to punish by exclusion those who refuse to obey their orders. In certain parts of the country they will undoubtedly use this power for the conservation of the grazing and so as to obtain the fullest yield from it. In others it is hoped that they will learn by experience and by example to do so.

(2) The panchayat should be held responsible for collecting the grazing revenue. It may be urged that this will be beyond their power. But if no cattle are allowed to graze in the reserve till the village fees are paid, it is hoped that pressure will be brought to bear upon any recalcitrant cattle-owners till the sum is forthcoming. The panchayats of the co-operative societies have shown themselves able to collect the interest on the sums lent by them. The Pinapeddas of Anantapur district have no difficulty in collecting the fines which they impose on ryots who do not do their share in clearing a river channel. There may be cases especially at first in which the panchayats will not have sufficient influence to collect the revenue. Such cases, it is hoped, will be few and they should become fewer if in one or two instances the panchayat is dissolved, and the rule of the forest subordinate is restored.

(3) The panchayat will be responsible to prevent the denudation of the grazing grounds and specially to prevent the removal of any forest produce for sale. The amount of forest produce on such lands will generally be trifling and little harm is likely to be done by the villagers themselves for their own use. Removal for sale however would soon result in complete destruction.

(4) The panchayat will be responsible for the clearing and maintenance of the boundary lines of blocks and for the carrying out of orders communicated to them from time to time.

Powers of panchayats.

43. The powers to be conferred on the panchayats should be the following :—

(1) Power to admit or exclude any cattle of their own village from the grazing grounds, or, where limitation is ordered, to decide what cattle are to be admitted. This will include the power to exclude the cattle of any person who is found cutting or doing other harm to the forest without permission, or who fails to pay his share of the revenue, or who refuses to obey the legitimate orders of the panchayat.

(2) Power to impound cattle which graze without permission.

(3) Power to regulate the use of fuel so far as it is available for domestic or agricultural purposes.

Control of the panchayats.

44. As to the control of the panchayats, the Committee consider that the general administrative control should be vested in the Revenue Divisional officer. The forests under the management of the panchayats should however be regularly inspected by the District Forest officer and the ranger who should then report the result of their inspection to the Collector either direct or through the Divisional officer. The present divorce of the Divisional officer from any share in the forest administration of the district appears to the Committee to be a mistake, and they hope that, if these recommendations are accepted, he may be brought into much closer touch with it. The authorities should interfere as little as possible in the actual management, the village panchayat being left to manage its affairs in its own way. So long as the results of their management are satisfactory, the panchayat should be left alone. If however they fail in their duties, they should first receive a warning. If this warning is ineffectual, the grazing fee may be raised, and if they are even then unwilling or unable to manage the forest without destroying it or to act up to their responsibilities, the panchayat should be dissolved. This should not however preclude the appointment of a fresh panchayat, if the authorities think fit, after a sufficient interval has elapsed for the villagers to have learned their lesson. In case the panchayat fails in its duties towards the villagers, the Divisional officer should, on receiving a general complaint, enquire into the matter and if necessary remove the panchayat and have a fresh selection made by the villagers. The Committee are however strongly of opinion that the decisions of the panchayats should not be subject to a regular appeal to any authority. General partiality or dereliction will be visited by removal. Particular instances of partiality will not be noticed.

45. The question was discussed whether it would be necessary to give the panchayats a definite legal position and specially whether it would be right to appoint them forest officers under the Act. On the whole it appears to the Committee that no legislation on the subject is necessary for the present, though it may be so when general legislation on the subject of panchayats is undertaken, and that it will not be advisable to appoint them as forest officers. As managers of the forest on behalf of Government they will have power to impound the cattle of persons trespassing therein. If prosecution is absolutely necessary the panchayat will have to report the facts to the forest officer, who will then if necessary proceed to prosecute the offenders, but the Committee hope there will be sufficient public opinion behind a panchayat, constituted as above described, to enable them to enforce their decisions without calling in the aid of the law. Already this has been found to be the case in the village forests of Chingleput where the panchayats have exacted fines, impounded cattle and even confiscated property without any protest whatever.

No need for legislation at present.

46. But even if the panchayat are able to enforce observance of their decisions as to protection upon the villagers, it is possible that they will not be able to collect the Government revenue or will not be willing to collect it even if they are able. In the tentative efforts made in Bombay to experiment with panchayat management it has been laid down that the panchayat should not be entrusted with the collection of the revenue as this will make them unpopular. In this Presidency however the Committee consider that the panchayat will be able to collect the revenue in the form in which they propose that it shall be collected and that if they are not able to do this they are not the sort of panchayats which is wanted. At all events the Government should be ensured against serious loss by a condition that no grazing will be allowed in any particular year till the revenue is paid and if the panchayat fail to pay up the revenue within a reasonable time they will be replaced by another panchayat or by the return of the Forest subordinate.

Ability of panchayat to collect the revenue.

47. The amount of revenue to be demanded from each village has still to be discussed. The simplest method would be to fix the amount with reference to an average of the grazing revenue of the reserve for the last five years, either more or less as circumstances may dictate. For instance if any considerable portion of a block had been closed during the last five years it might be necessary to take a higher figure than the average. If on the other hand the reserve had previously been considerably over-grazed a lower amount than the average might be demanded, or the Government might think it desirable to lower the amount in particular places owing to the poverty and poor circumstances of the villages concerned. If more than one village has a share in the reserve the demand should be distributed between the various villages according to the acreage under the control of each. As an alternative the reserve might be leased out at so many annas per acre. This system would be particularly welcomed in Nellore where the system of leasing eastern or village "Kanchas" at so much an acre has been in force for some years.

Methods of fixing the revenue.

48. It has been suggested to the committee that, if the panchayats are to protect and to improve the grazing grounds entrusted to them, it will be necessary or advisable that they should receive grants of money for the purpose, and that a definite proportion or even the whole of the grazing fees should be ear-marked to meet this expenditure. The committee are, however, of opinion that as these particular villages should be given very large concessions in the right to manage their grazing grounds, to obtain free, as far as it is available, their agricultural and domestic requirements in the way of fuel, and especially to exclude the cattle of other villages, it is right and equitable that they should be called upon to protect their grazing grounds and to clear their boundaries without specific remuneration. As regards the improvement of the grazing grounds if a definite grant is given to the panchayats for planting or any similar purpose it will be necessary to ensure that the money is not wasted and in particular that it does not remain in the pockets of the panchayatdars who would be subjected to grave temptation. If these safeguards are to be adequate they will entail the

No need for remuneration to panchayats.

keeping of elaborate systems of accounts and the constant interference of the authorities which are the very things which should be avoided. On the other hand the committee are strongly of opinion that more could and should be done than is done at present in the way of improving existing grazing grounds, and extending facilities for grazing. At the time when most of the present grazing areas were reserved it was definitely laid down that one of the chief reasons for levying of fees was the necessity for improving as well as for protecting the grazing grounds. But as far as the Committee have been able to discover for the last twenty years practically nothing has been done in the way of improving them. The Committee would therefore strongly recommend that a considerable sum should be spent annually on the extension of grazing facilities and the improvement of village grazing grounds, especially in the way of improving water-supplies. Where a panchayat exists it might be entrusted with the execution of approved schemes and be paid on their satisfactory completion. The panchayats also might be of great use to the Agricultural department if, as suggested by Mr. Sampson in his Report on Cattle Survey, attempts are being made to introduce grasses of a better kind in the grazing grounds. They might look after breeding bulls in places where the Govenment are maintaining them, and generally might assist the Agricultural department in any scheme which they may have in view to popularise better methods of breeding and rearing cattle. As regards the improvement of the tree growth, while the Committee consider that there are great difficulties in the way of making special grants to panchayats for planting, they are convinced of the desirability of encouraging the panchayatdars to plant trees in their grazing grounds whenever they are willing to do so. Advice as to the trees to be planted and the best methods of producing them should be freely given by the Forest experts, and the panchayats should be definitely assured that no extra charge will ever be levied for any improvement made to the grazing grounds by the villagers. Any trees they plant will be the property of the community and no one will be allowed to interfere with their enjoyment of their produce.

Need for improving the grazing grounds.

Other duties which might be entrusted to panchayats.

49. Before leaving the subject of the classification of the forests and the agency by which each class is to be managed, it is necessary to consider the question of the agency by which this classification should be made. The most suitable way in which the classification could be carried out appears to be for a senior Revenue Divisional Officer and a Forest Officer to conduct an inspection together of each reserve or block of reserves in the district, and make a joint report stating into which class each reserve or part of a reserve should be divided. The Collector should forward this report with his own opinions through the Conservator to the Board of Revenue with whom the final decision should lie. It is observed that this classification will have to be made with great care and with full consideration of all the circumstances. Great common sense will be necessary on the part of the officers and they will have to be on their guard against an excessively professional point of view on the one hand and any tendency to excessive laxity on the other.

Agency by which classification should be carried out.

50. The Committtee consider that the entrusting the management of village grazing grounds to village panchayats should be carried out in all districts on an extended scale, but there will necessarily be very large areas even in the neighbourhood of villages, still left under the management of the Forest Department alone. Quite apart from the forests of the classes which have been expressly reserved for departmental control, there will be considerable areas where the villagers are not willing to form a panchayat or are unwilling to undertake the responsibilities which are involved. There are also localities where the general level of the village intelligence and power of co-operation are so low and the sense of responsibility so rudimentary that it would be foolish to expect to be able to form a capable and willing panchayat. Such are some of the Golla villages in Guntūr and Nellore, where the inhabitants seem to have little idea of anything except finding food for unlimited goats and sheep. There are also

Management of forests still left under sole control of the Forest Department.

villages where many of the inhabitants have been, with or without the connivance of the forest subordinate, habitual forest depredators and could not, for the present at least, be entrusted with anything. In all these reserves, however, it should be possible, if the Committee's proposals as are accepted, to concentrate the lower subordinate staff on a much smaller area, and therefore to exercise a much more constant and more rigorous control over their actions; but certain special alterations might be made in the method of protection in the interests both of the forests and the people. The watcher should be reduced to the position which he was originally intended to occupy of a cooly and not of a detective or preventive officer. Something might also be done by an adaptation of the Bombay system of "Round Guards." That is to say, instead of each guard being in separate charge of a beat directly under the Ranger, who, as the guard very well knows, can inspect him and his work only at considerable intervals, an Officer of the Deputy Ranger or Forester class should be placed in charge of a "round" of several beats and be responsible for the control and work of the guards in charge of them. The attention of the Committee has been drawn to the excellent effects of training the guards in the vernacular schools and of holding out improved prospects in the way of promotion for the guards who are successful in the school and who carry out in the forests the principles instilled into them at the school. The Committee believe that a system of patrol by a Forester or a Deputy Ranger with two or three guards paying surprise visits to the various forests would lead to the detection of many more real offences and to the creation of fewer false ones than the present system of a single guard wandering about alone. This system would also have the additional advantage that an immediate enquiry would be made on the spot by a more responsible official than the single subordinate. If the case went into court, there would be the evidence of more than one witness to support it which would be far more convincing if the case were true, and far more easy to expose by cross-examination if the case were false.

Assistance of villagers in protecting the forests to be encouraged.

51. The Committee are also of opinion that in many cases, the adjoining villagers could be induced to aid in the work of conserving the forests, especially in the way of preventing fires, and even perhaps to undertake the whole guarding and protection of certain areas, by a judicious system of rewards for successful conservation such as exists in other provinces. The evidence of Mr. Battie, Conservator of Forests, shows that this system works successfully in the United Provinces, and it also works successfully in Bombay. The principle of communal punishments for failing to assist in the suppression of fires is already recognised and the committee consider that it should be possible for a Collector to give communal rewards in the shape of a grant of forest produce or of grazing at a reduced rate or even free, when a forest had been successfully protected for a specified period.

Difference between Committee's proposals for village management and previous experiments.

52. It will be noticed that the Committee's proposals for village control differ very widely from the hitherto accepted conception of a village forest and have little affinity to experiments in that line which are now being made in Coimbatore and Chingleput. All those experiments start with the gift to the villagers of a piece of forest which they are to enjoy and control for all purposes without any payment to the State. Apart from the fact that the Committee have already pronounced generally against free grazing, it is plain that public generosity on the Coimbatore and Chingleput pattern could not be very widely extended. Further, those experiments give to the villagers the management of the forests for all purposes, not for grazing alone, and contemplate disposal by them of forest growth of some value. The Committee are of opinion that there is at present no reason to believe that the ryots of this presidency have that interest in and that understanding of forestry, as apart from grazing, which will enable them to do justice to such a responsibility and think it better that communal management should for some time to come, be confined to grazing alone, except in those forests in which the growth is not worth conservation by the State. The Coimbatore experiment, so far as the information available for the Committee goes, was wrongly conceived from the beginning. It included too

many villages, the panchayat was unwieldy, it was too much bound by rules and formality and there was too much official dry-nursing. The Chingleput experiments have proved nothing except that the villagers are willing, and sometimes able to protect what may be assigned to them against others. They have not proved that the panchayat can enforce restraint or moderation among its own villagers, for the simple reason that the assignment made to each village was more than sufficient for the maximum of the village requirements. For instance, although the panchayats were bound down to enforce a limit of cattle, the number fixed as limit was practically identical with the total number of cattle in the village.

Other grievances—high compounding fees.

53. There are still some real grievances which are yet to be dealt with. One of those frequently complained of was the imposition of high compounding fees and of double punishments, *i.e.*, a pound fee and a compounding fee or a magisterial punishment in addition. The Committee are of opinion that the recent orders which limit the compounding fee to a maximum sum per head of cattle without any regard to the number concerned are wrongly conceived. They do not produce equitable results. A few goats driven into a forest may do more harm than twenty or thirty cows; but the compounding fee leviable in the first case is far less than it would be in the second. Also, it is right that a Forest officer in fixing a compounding fee, should take into account many circumstances besides the mere number of animals involved, for instance the frequency or rarity of offences in that particular neighbourhood and the degree of wilfulness shown in the particular case and he should therefore be allowed to use his discretion in determining the fee. The result of hampering that discretion is said to have been that the maximum fee has been imposed in a larger number of cases than was done before. The Committee are of opinion that the only object in fixing a maximum is to ensure that really serious cases are taken into court, where the evidence can be more thoroughly thrashed out than at a departmental enquiry. The best method of attaining this object appears to be to fix an absolute maximum for each case and not for each animal, so that in cases which require a punishment heavier than a fine of the sum fixed will be taken before a Magistrate. It is important however, that this maximum should not be fixed too low as the ryots have a very strong objection to being dragged into court and would in many cases rather pay a somewhat higher fee as composition than be obliged to undergo the expense, trouble, and disgrace of being placed in the dock. The Committee after serious thought and after considering the case of Bombay, where a similar system prevails and the maximum is fixed at Rs. 50, recommend that in this Presidency a limit of Rs. 100 be made the maximum compounding fee in any one grazing case, whether one animal or five hundred may happen to be concerned. All cases in which a more severe punishment than a fine of Rs. 100 is necessary should be prosecuted before a Magistrate.

Impounding a sufficient punishment for illicit grazing on grazing grounds.

54. The Committee moreover consider that in the case of trespass in reserves classed as grazing grounds, which may still be retained under the management of the Forest Department, the levy of the pound fee alone will be sufficient punishment. If necessary, the pound fees may be raised to a maximum under section 58 of the Forest Act. If this punishment is found to be inadequate and continual cattle trespass is reported to be going on, the grazing fees in that particular area may be raised for the time. The Committee have very anxiously discussed whether this provision will be sufficient to prevent illicit goat-browsing. But they consider that a trial should be given to the system on the understanding that if it does not prove sufficiently effective, prosecution for illicit goat-browsing should again be admitted.

Grievances in regard to migratory cattle.

55. Touching the grazing of distant or migratory cattle, the principal grievances alleged were two. The grazing block for which the permit is necessary was stated to be sometimes too small an area, and in other cases to have been arranged without consideration as to whether water was available. The Committee are aware that if limitation of any kind is to be insisted on, it is necessary that a single permit should only admit to a single block. But they consider that these blocks should be a good deal larger than they sometimes are and a careful consideration should

invariably be given to the water-supply before the blocks are fixed. Also cattle on the way from the coast have frequently to pass through reserved forests. The parts over which a right of way exists are narrow and the cattle, for which it is very difficult to get food on the march, are hungry. In consequence it is impossible to prevent straying and trespass. The Committee consider that rights of way through the forests are as a rule much too narrow and should in no case be less than ten yards wide unless the forest adjoining the path is well fenced. Areas closed to grazing, which adjoin a right of way, should as a rule be fenced and felled coupes in a similar position should invariably be so. In regard to the particular grievance under consideration, the Committee would recommend that herds of cattle travelling to distant reserves for grazing should be allowed to graze without permit within fifty yards of a right of way in open forest, provided they are *bonâ-fide* travellers and do actually move more than ten miles a day. The right to claim this privilege should be dependent on the production of a *radhari* pass countersigned by the village munsif of the village where the herd spent the previous night.

Classified trees.

56. Another grievance which was brought to the notice of the Committee in several of the districts they visited was the difficulty of obtaining permits for the cutting of classified trees on unreserved lands for domestic or agricultural purposes. It was established by the evidence of Tahsildars and others that as long a period as two months was allowed to elapse before the ryot was able to obtain the permit he asked for. The Committee have no special recommendation to make for the disposal of trees on ordinary unreserved lands, except that the procedure for obtaining permits should be made as simple as possible. But they recommend that the panchayats should have power to permit the cutting free of charge for genuine agricultural and domestic purposes of all tree growth, classified and unclassified, on the grazing grounds entrusted to their charge, whether reserve forests falling under class V or unreserved lands handed over to them as recommended in paragraph 32.

Complaints as regards the subordinate magistracy.

57. Another ground of complaint was the inadequate consideration given to forest cases by the subordinate magistracy. It was suggested as a partial remedy for this that a certain number of forest cases should be tried before Divisional Magistrates. The Committee recommend that this proposal be given a trial.

Other grievances.

58. Complaints were also made of the way in which timber transit rules were worked in some places and of the effect of the presumption in favour of Government under section 56 of the Forest Act. But the evidence before the Committee does not, in their opinion, justify any special recommendation in regard to these matters.

59. Most of the other grievances already referred to will be mitigated, if not entirely removed, if the proposals of the Committee are accepted. The complaints received in Nellore that the grazing in the reserves was of no value because too many cattle were admitted and the reserves were not closed to grazing till the rains were over will completely lose their force as far as grazing grounds and forests of class V are concerned as the village community will be able to manage the grazing as they like. In the major timber and fuel forests or in protective forests, if limitation to the possibility is enforced, there should be plenty of grass for the animals actually admitted.

60. The impounding of stray cattle which was the cause of numerous complaints will also be considerably less frequent where the villagers look after their own grazing. The chief causes of this mishap were stated to be the proximity of reserves to villages or cultivation, the narrowness of rights of way, and the difficulty found in controlling the cattle by the small number of men or boys who accompany them. In the areas in which the management of grazing has been entrusted to the villagers they will be able, if they choose, to excuse accidental trespass of cattle. The Committee have already given their opinion that rights of way should be enlarged. The improvement of the boundaries where necessary, setting up of red boards to indicate the areas closed to grazing and the fencing of closed coupes should all tend

to prevent the occurrence of accidental trespass in areas retained under the control of the Forest Department. The Committee are of opinion that people can, if they will, prevent their cattle from trespassing in these valuable areas just as they do in the case of cultivated fields, and with the more adequate protection, which it will be possible hereafter to give to these reserves, the Committee hope that the villagers will learn to prevent their cattle from trespassing.

61. On the whole, therefore, the Committee are firmly of opinion that this attempt to arrive at a solution of some of the problems connected with forest conservation in general and forest grazing in particular will bring real relief to the people from the undoubted troubles and hardships which they have to put up with at present and will also largely assist in the protection and improvements of those forests which are worth preservation.

FUEL.

62. The points on which the Government desire the opinion of the Committee on the respect of fuel supply are two—whether the present system of supplying fuel from the Government forests is satisfactory, and whether any suggestions can be made for further facilities for increasing the supply of fuel from the Government forests. The methods of extracting and disposing of fuel from the Government forests are at present in a transition stage. The permit system with its wasteful destructiveness and its abundant opportunities for theft is dead. The Government depot system, a system admittedly transitional, by which the Forest Department fell the wood in the forest, cart it to towns in the neighbourhood and dispose of it there at a fixed price which is supposed to cover expenses and leave a small profit, is dying. And in all districts attempts are being made to establish the sale of the annual coupe standing—to be felled and removed by the purchaser. This is known as the contract system. It was introduced by the late Mr. Brasier in Tinnevelly and has there been thoroughly and successfully established; in most other districts it has only recently been started. In some places coupes are still felled and stacked by the Forest Department, the fuel, after being stacked, being disposed of in the forests to private buyers. In other places coupes are sold standing to contractors who fell the coupes and dispose of the produce wherever they can obtain the best market; in most cases, however, a condition is inserted in the contractor's agreement that enough fuel to supply the wants of the local population shall be sold to them in the coupe at a fixed rate.

The permit system.

63. Touching the relative merits of three systems—the permit system, the depot system, and the contract system—the evidence of the great majority of the non-official witnesses and that of the experts of the Forest Department is diametrically opposed; the non-officials, representing for the most part the town-dwelling consumers, are almost unanimously in favour of the restoration of the permit system. It supplies the cheapest fuel and it brings it to the very doors of the consumer in the small quantities which he requires for his daily consumption. It gives employment to the feeblest and most shiftless members of the community, who are unable to earn their living otherwise and who, it is alleged, are compelled, when deprived of this simple way of obtaining their daily meal, to resort to crime as the only alternative. The Forest officers, on the other hand, have affirmed that the permit system is wasteful and destructive, cannot possibly be controlled and, so far from preventing crime, gives numberless opportunities for theft, opportunities of which the criminal classes are not slow to take advantage. It is wasteful because the holders of permits, even if they are honest, do not know how to cut properly and would not take the trouble to do so if they did. As a consequence the trees which they lop to pieces in getting their daily bundle never recover from their ill-treatment. The young growth which should be coming on, is given no chance to grow. Until it has reached a certain height it is absolutely necessary that browsing animals, cows as well as sheep and goats, should be kept away from it. But as the permit-holders cut all over the forest it is impossible to close to grazing the places where they have been lopping the trees. Moreover, very frequently, the holder of a permit for one tree would cut a dozen or more before he found one to his liking and would leave the rejected ones lying in the forest to rot and to form material for fires. It is destructive because the permit-holder not only

cuts the trees wrongly but cuts the wrong trees. If a forest is to be maintained and improved it is necessary to cut away the crooked ill-growing and worthless trees and to preserve the best specimens of the best species as seed bearers and as shade for the young growth which is to come up. Unfortunately these are the first trees which the permit-holders cut to pieces. The system which was in force in the Presidency for some years, of charging a lower price for the removal of dead wood than of green branches, was particularly pernicious. The permit-holder going to collect his bundle of dead wood, used to take care that when he visited the same spot again a few days later, he should find an ample supply of dead wood awaiting him. All that it was necessary for him to do was to lop off or partially cut through a sufficient number of green branches for him to find them dead when he went again. The result of all this on the Nallamalais in Kurnool has been that the Forest officers have in the five years since the permit system was stopped brought out 4,000 tons of wood without felling a single tree; the whole of this vast amount of wood had been killed and left lying by the permit-holders. Moreover, with the permit-holders allowed to range all over a forest, it is impossible to check whether they take one head-load or ten under cover of their single permit. It was for this reason largely that the system was so cheap. It is also for this reason that the Sugalis and other criminal classes took to this profession in preference to other and more risky forms of crime. Wherever the permit system has been tried in other provinces of India or in continental countries, it has been found necessary to abandon it. The Committee would deprecate the very retrograde step of returning to this system in this Presidency now that it has been definitely given up. The Sugalis and others can, if they will, find a living by working in the coupes for the Forest Department or for the contractors. Even where it has not yet been found possible to work the felling departmentally or by contract, either owing to lack of demand for fuel, to lack of communications or to the forest being as yet unfit for working, the alternative of destroying it by means of the permit system of extraction does not commend itself to the Committee.

64. The Hon'ble Mr. Kesava Pillai is unable to agree with the view of the majority of the Committee in this wholesale condemnation of the permit system. He would gladly see the restoration of the system in the less valuable forests. He is of opinion that the system is of advantage to the poorer ryots who are unable to pay the price of fuel felled upon the contract system, and the consumer to whom it supplies fuel at the cheapest rate. It also affords employment to the poorest classes of the community. The majority of the Committee consider that these objections are fully met by their proposals.

The Government depot system.

65. The system next in favour with the non-official public, except in places like Tinnevelly where the contract system has long been established, is the Government depot system. This system was introduced about ten years ago admittedly as a temporary measure. It is approved of by the public because it produces a fairly constant supply of cheap fuel at an unvarying price. It is not to be wondered at that the supply of fuel at the Government depots was cheap as the prices were so fixed in many cases that if the time and labour of the Forest staff are taken into account, the fuel was sold at a loss. The establishment of the depots was a necessary measure when the permit system was abolished as there were no contractors ready to take up the business, no coolies trained in felling scientifically and no certainty of a demand for the fuel when it was brought into the towns. As soon however as the trade was well established, the Government decided—and in the opinion of the Committee rightly decided—to withdraw from interference with the business and to leave the trade to follow its own natural lines.

The Contract system.

The depot system, useful though it was for a time, had many inherent disadvantages: as was observed in 1905 by the Conservator of Forests, Southern Circle, Mr. Lodge, the time of the Forest officer can be much better employed than in checking stock in depots, controlling retail sales and working out systems for the prevention of frauds by temporary subordinates in charge of depots. How difficult it is to prevent such frauds was learnt by bitter experience in Guntūr. If the time of the Forest officers is frittered away in supervising the

management of a number of petty retail shops all over their districts, at a distance from the forests, they have not the time to supervise the subordinates in the forest. Every day spent by the Forest officer or Ranger away from the forests gives opportunities to his lower subordinates to exercise their powers of exaction or extortion. Even if the Forest officers had the time to spare, departmental working is never so efficient as the working of private contractors who, if they fail to remove the whole of the produce of a coupe, which they have taken on contract, lose their profit altogether. They are working for their own gain and not from any philanthropic motives of supplying fuel to a town population in need of it or of obtaing a doubtful profit for the State. In consequence, where the contract system has been substituted for Government working, the increase in the amount extracted from the forest and put on the market has generally been very marked. The contractors, moreover, are quick to discover where fuel is most needed and to direct the supply to meet the demand. In Madura, since the contract system has been working, not only has the amount brought in from the forests of the Madura district increased but there has been the large additional quantity of 500 tons a month imported from the Trichinopoly district.

Objections to the contract system.

66. On all these grounds, therefore, the Committee are in favour of allowing the trade to run its course without restriction, the one objection, and it is a serious objection, being that the abolition of the depots has been in nearly every instance succeeded by an immediate rise in prices. In Nellore it has risen only from Rs. 6 to Rs. 6–4 a ton But in Kavali it has risen from Rs. 5–5 to Rs. 5–13, in Guntūr from Rs. 9–6 to Rs 12, in Madura from Rs. 10 to Rs. 12–8. The Committee have made serious efforts in all towns which they have visited to discover the cause of this rise in prices, and in particular whether it is the result of combination. One reason for the rise in the price of fuel is that it has followed the upward tendency of all other articles in India in recent years. Labour, cartage, rent of depots, and all other items in the business are so much dearer that it would be surprising if the price of fuel had not risen also. The fact that in the last few years before the depots were closed it had been found necessary to raise the prices of fuel in nearly all Government depots in order to cover the cost of extraction shows that th rise in the market price had been going on even before the depots were closed. It is to this general rise in price of all commodities that the Hon'ble Mr. Theagaraya Chetty, whose opinion as an owner of forests and a leading merchant of Madras should be given due weight, ascribes the rise of the price of fuel in Madras town. The closure of the small and uuimportant depots in the city has in his opinion had no effect whatever on the price of fuel, nor is there any shortage of supply, which he declares is ample. Nevertheless the price of fuel in the city has risen to quite as great an extent as in the mufassal towns. Again, the contractors in most of the places visited by the Committee are all new to the work and cannot be expected to be able to manage their own business so economically as they will probably be able to do when they have acquired managers who know the work, gangs of coolies, carts, and other accessaries at considerably cheaper rates than now. Moreover, in future years, if the business is found to pay handsomely, there should be more competitors in the business ready to cut each other's prices down. There is of course always the danger of combination among the contractors, but after most searching enquiring on this particular point the Committee have been unable to discover any trace of combination in any of the towns which they visited, and they consider that the more the trade is encouraged and the fewer restrictions are put in its way the less likelihood there is of any combination occurring. The trade is a most difficult one to corner as the loss in weight by keeping fuel for even a few days is so great that each dealer is obliged to sell off his stock as soon as it arrives. The Committee would therefore respectfully deprecate the adoption at this stage of any measure which would tend to hamper the trade and keep out intending contractors or to discourage the investment of capital in fuel plantations. The contract system has been worked successfully for twenty years in Tinnevelly without complaint. It is the only method by which the towns of the Bombay Presidency are supplied with fuel from Government forests and the Committee see no reason why this system, given a fair chance, should not be equally successful all over this Presidency.

67. In particular, the Committee would suggest the withdrawal of the orders passed in G.O. No. 2468, Revenue, dated 16th August 1912, to the effect that the Forest Department should re-open the depot in Madura if or when the price of fuel exceeds by 25 per cent. the prices in certain other large towns in the neighbourhood. From the evidence recorded it is clear that this concession is by no means considered a satisfactory solution of the problem by the residents of Madura. The opinion of the citizens on the subject was very vigorously expressed by Mr. G. Srinivasa Rao, a late member of the Legislative Council. The orders passed would moreover, it is submitted, be impossible to work in practice. If the people of Madura are to have the right to have a Government depot opened if the local price of fuel is 25 per cent. higher than that at Trichinopoly or Tanjore, it will be impossible to resist the inevitable demands of the people of those towns to have a Government depot established in corresponding circumstances. The table of prices prepared in the Board's office for the month of October shows that the price in Madura is Rs. 12-8-0 a ton as against Rs. 14 to Rs. 16-8-0 in other towns of the district and Rs. 15 in Tanjore and Trichinopoly.

Recommendation that G.O. No. 2468, Revenue, dated 16th August 1912, be withdrawn.

68. It is true that Madura is larger than the other towns mentioned, but if Madura is to be provided with fuel below the market rate, it is difficult to see why Madras should be deprived of this privilege. If the Forest department are to be prepared to open a Government depot at a month's notice they must keep up a walled-in site for a depot at a considerable cost and must hold back a very considerable portion of the standing crop to stock the Government depot in case of need. Thus working plans will be thrown out of gear and the market supply will be diminished. The Committee are therefore strongly of opinion that the contract system should be given a fair trial in the Madura district as in all other districts of the Presidency. In the case of a combination of dealers to the injury of the consumer or of any other breakdown of the contract system the Government should, however, take such measures as may be indicated by the circumstances in each case, and make the produce of the forests available direct to the consumer at a fair market rate. But until this occurs no measure should be taken which will tend to create a feeling of insecurity and keep capital out of the trade.

69. So far the question of town fuel-supply alone has been dealt with. A few remarks on rural supply will now be added. The first and the greatest difficulty in connection with the supply of fuel to the rural population is that the ordinary Southern Indian villager is not as yet prepared to pay for his fuel. He can obtain wood fuel for nothing from his patta land or from the unreserved lands in the village. If these sources fail, he can fall back on the dried stalks of cholam, dholl or cotton. If these are exhausted, he has still the cowdung which would be so much better used in manuring his land. If his village is near a forest reserve, he can, in the absence of the guard or the watcher or with their connivance, help himself from the forest. The one thing he will not do is to pay for it. Even when the permit system was in force the greater part of the fuel taken on permits was removed for sale in the nearest town and not for domestic supply in the villages. In some parts of the districts visited by the Committee attempts to open coupes specially for the supply of fuel to the villagers have had to be given up for want of demand. Even in the village forests recently started in Chingleput, the panchayatdars stated that they consider the fuel of very minor importance in comparison to the grazing. Another difficulty in dealing with the question of supplying the villagers from the reserves is that if a coupe is felled, it must be closed for a series of years for regeneration. The villagers have the strongest objection to a closed area near their village, but at the same time, they are not prepared to go to a distance to purchase their fuel. The Committee hope that the proposals which they have made for the classification of the forests and for village control will to some extent help towards the solution of these difficulties. In the areas handed over as grazing grounds, the villages will obtain their small requirements in the way of domestic fuel free. In other areas where the villagers undertake to protect the closed coupes the trouble caused by the presence of a closed area in proximity to a village will to a large extent be mitigated.

Rural supply.

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Objections to the contract system.

66. On all these grounds, therefore, the Committee are in favour of allowing the trade to run its course without restriction, the one objection, and it is a serious objection, being that the abolition of the depots has been in nearly every instance succeeded by an immediate rise in prices. In Nellore it has risen only from Rs. 6 to Rs. 6–4 a ton But in Kavali it has risen from Rs. 5–5 to Rs. 5-13, in Guntūr from Rs. 9–6 to Rs 12, in Madura from Rs. 10 to Rs. 12–8. The Committee have made serious efforts in all towns which they have visited to discover the cause of this rise in prices, and in particular whether it is the result of combination. One reason for the rise in the price of fuel is that it has followed the upward tendency of all other articles in India in recent years. Labour, cartage, rent of depots, and all other items in the business are so much dearer that it would be surprising if the price of fuel had not risen also. The fact that in the last few years before the depots were closed it had been found necessary to raise the prices of fuel in nearly all Government depots in order to cover the cost of extraction shows that th rise in the market price had been going on even before the depots were closed. It is to this general rise in price of all commodities that the Hon'ble Mr. Theagaraya Chetty, whose opinion as an owner of forests and a leading merchant of Madras should be given due weight, ascribes the rise of the price of fuel in Madras town. The closure of the small and uuimportant depots in the city has in his opinion had no effect whatever on the price of fuel, nor is there any shortage of supply, which he declares is ample. Nevertheless the price of fuel in the city has risen to quite as great an extent as in the mufassal towns. Again, the contractors in most of the places visited by the Committee are all new to the work and cannot be expected to be able to manage their own business so economically as they will probably be able to do when they have acquired managers who know the work, gangs of coolies, carts, and other accessaries at considerably cheaper rates than now. Moreover, in future years, if the business is found to pay handsomely, there should be more competitors in the business ready to cut each other's prices down. There is of course always the danger of combination among the contractors, but after most searching enquiring on this particular point the Committee have been unable to discover any trace of combination in any of the towns which they visited, and they consider that the more the trade is encouraged and the fewer restrictions are put in its way the less likelihood there is of any combination occurring. The trade is a most difficult one to corner as the loss in weight by keeping fuel for even a few days is so great that each dealer is obliged to sell off his stock as soon as it arrives. The Committee would therefore respectfully deprecate the adoption at this stage of any measure which would tend to hamper the trade and keep out intending contractors or to discourage the investment of capital in fuel plantations. The contract system has been worked successfully for twenty years in Tinnevelly without complaint. It is the only method by which the towns of the Bombay Presidency are supplied with fuel from Government forests and the Committee see no reason why this system, given a fair chance, should not be equally successful all over this Presidency.

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Recommendation that G.O. No. 2468, Revenue, dated 16th August 1912, be withdrawn.

68. It is true that Madura is larger than the other towns mentioned, but if Madura is to be provided with fuel below the market rate, it is difficult to see why Madras should be deprived of this privilege. If the Forest department are to be prepared to open a Government depot at a month's notice they must keep up a walled-in site for a depot at a considerable cost and must hold back a very considerable portion of the standing crop to stock the Government depot in case of need. Thus working plans will be thrown out of gear and the market supply will be diminished. The Committee are therefore strongly of opinion that the contract system should be given a fair trial in the Madura district as in all other districts of the Presidency. In the case of a combination of dealers to the injury of the consumer or of any other breakdown of the contract system the Government should, however, take such measures as may be indicated by the circumstances in each case, and make the produce of the forests available direct to the consumer at a fair market rate. But until this occurs no measure should be taken which will tend to create a feeling of insecurity and keep capital out of the trade.

69. So far the question of town fuel-supply alone has been dealt with. A few remarks on rural supply will now be added. The first and the greatest difficulty in connection with the supply of fuel to the rural population is that the ordinary Southern Indian villager is not as yet prepared to pay for his fuel. He can obtain wood fuel for nothing from his patta land or from the unreserved lands in the village. If these sources fail, he can fall back on the dried stalks of cholam, dholl or cotton. If these are exhausted, he has still the cowdung which would be so much better used in manuring his land. If his village is near a forest reserve, he can, in the absence of the guard or the watcher or with their connivance, help himself from the forest. The one thing he will not do is to pay for it. Even when the permit system was in force the greater part of the fuel taken on permits was removed for sale in the nearest town and not for domestic supply in the villages. In some parts of the districts visited by the Committee attempts to open coupes specially for the supply of fuel to the villagers have had to be given up for want of demand. Even in the village forests recently started in Chingleput, the panchayatdars stated that they consider the fuel of very minor importance in comparison to the grazing. Another difficulty in dealing with the question of supplying the villagers from the reserves is that if a coupe is felled, it must be closed for a series of years for regeneration. The villagers have the strongest objection to a closed area near their village, but at the same time, they are not prepared to go to a distance to purchase their fuel. The Committee hope that the proposals which they have made for the classification of the forests and for village control will to some extent help towards the solution of these difficulties. In the areas handed over as grazing grounds, the villages will obtain their small requirements in the way of domestic fuel free. In other areas where the villagers undertake to protect the closed coupes the trouble caused by the presence of a closed area in proximity to a village will to a large extent be mitigated.

Rural supply.

The contract system of felling and removing fuel should certainly prove advantageous to the neighbouring villagers. Larger areas will be felled and the villagers will be able to buy on the spot and at fixed rates the fuel and timber which they require. The only suggestion which the Committee have to make with regard to rural supply of fuel is that something more might be done than is done at present in the way of opening a larger number of small coupes adjoining the villages, wherever there is an effective demand. At first these coupes must be felled and sold departmentally, but there is no reason why in time the villagers should not be induced to purchase and distribute the felled stock, and eventually be taught to fell small coupes themselves on the contract system.

Leaf manure.

70. The question of the supply of leaf manure from the forests has recently been the subject of enquiry by a special Committee of experts appointed to investigate into the matter in the Madura district ; and the present Committee have very little to add to the conclusions then arrived at, and approved by the Board and Government in G.O. No. 1605, Revenue, dated 29th May 1911. The custom of using forest leaves for the manuring of wet land is an old one. It obtains to a very different degree in different districts. In some the demand is enormous, in others it hardly exists. An opportunity for studying the question on the spot was found in the district of Madura where the Committee had the advantage of a personal explanation of the bearings of the matter on forest conservancy by Mr. Bryant, District Forest Officer, who was a member of the above-mentioned Committee, and has made a special study of question. Mr. Sampson, then Acting Director of Agriculture, another member of that Committee, explained on the field the efforts being made by the Agricultural department to popularise other and more economic methods of green manuring than the application of forest leaves. In the District of Anantapur the question was studied in quite a different form. There the leaves chiefly used for green manure are those of *Cassia auriculata and Pongamia glabra* both of which are found on waste lands and village porambokes rather than in forest reserves.

Conditions in Madura.

71. Mr. Bryant was able to convince the Committee, through their own personal observation, of the harm done to the forest by the lopping of branches for green manure. In the words of the Inspector-General of Forests in his note on the forests of this Presidency, the use of green foliage results in a serious retardation of growth and ultimately in the death of the trees operated on, while the removal of foliage either green or dry destroys the fertility of the soil in preventing the formation of humus, in removing a source of soil protection and in inducing an increased tendency to denudation. This custom may have done little harm when the extent of the forests was much greater and the value of their produce much less than these now are, but it is far too wasteful and harmful to be continued under modern conditions of increasing cultivation and receding forests. In 1895 less than 7,000 cart-loads of green leaves were removed on permit from two ranges of Madura district. Seeing that actual experiment was proved that a fully stocked acre of fuel forest, stripped to the last leaf, yields little over one cart-load, these figures are sufficiently alarming, but they pale into insignificance beside the figures of a recent year in which over 43,000 cart-loads were removed from the same area. Mr. Bryant had therefore little difficulty in showing from figures that, even if the valuable fuel forests of Madura were given up to no other purpose than the supply of green manure for the rice fields of the Periyar area, the supply would now be inadequate, even apart from the fact that, owing to the harm done to the forests, it will gradually or rapidly decrease every year.

Results of sowing green manure on the land.

72. Mr. Sampson showed to the committee in several villages the admirable results obtained by sowing a crop of *Sesbania aculeata* or *Tephrosia purpurea* in the paddy fields in the intervals between two crops of rice. The committee are of opinion that more could and should be done through the agency of the revenue authorities to inform the ryots of the advantage of this system and to induce them to try experiments in their own villages. They were surprised to find in Madura that

while most valuable demonstrations and experiments were being conducted by the Agricultural Department, not nearly enough had been done to bring those demonstrations to the notice of the ryots or even of the officials who should advise the ryots in such matters. A Divisional Officer and a Tahsildar were, the committee ascertained, completely ignorant of the existence of any experiments at all. But from the excellent start which has already been made the committee are convinced that, in spite of hitherto insufficient advertisement, in a comparatively short time this method of raising green manure will have spread all over the Periyar area, and that similar results could be obtained in other districts of the Presidency. In fact the new practice is already spreading. The only obstacle to the universal adoption of this system being want of water in some of the smaller tanks.

No need for any general change in Government policy.

73. The Committee are not, therefore, of opinion that any alteration is needed in the present policy of gradually raising the price of the forest leaves, and thus stimulating the ryots to adopt the more effective and more economical system advocated by the Agricultural Experts. They were however surprised to find that in Madura district in 1911 the then Collector, instead of adopting the gradual method recommended by the Government had passed a definite order that from that date forward no green manure could be taken from the reserved forest at all. They were still more surprised to find that no definite complaint of this somewhat arbitrary order was made by any of the witnesses before them, though every opportunity was given to them to express their dissatisfaction, if they would, and a general demand for free leaf manure was frequently put forward. The Committee, therefore, while recognising that the passing of the order was inexpedient and unauthorised, consider that it has not been established in the course of their enquiry that any serious harm has been done by it.

Opinion of the Hon'ble Mr. Kesava Pillai.

74. The Hon'ble Mr. Kesava Pillai thinks that professional objections to the removal of green leaf manure are exaggerated. He points out that this supply was contemplated by Dr. Brandis in paragraphs 365 to 367 of his suggestions for Forest Administration in the Madras Presidency, and was even mentioned by him as being advantageous in removing growth of the less valuable kinds. He argues that the introduction of the green manure crops will take time and objects to prohibitive prices for leaf manure, and particularly to the entire stoppage of removal in Madura which he thinks should be rescinded. He thinks that the injury to the forests, *if any*, is outweighed by the benefit to agriculture. He lays special stress on the statement in Circular No. 22 of the Government of India, Revenue and Agriculture, dated 15th July 1901, that changes must be gently and gradually made, and that the claims of cultivation are stronger than those of forest preservation.

Seed to be supplied by agricultural department.

75. One alteration in the present orders on the subject is strongly recommended by the committee; the supply of seed of Sesbania or other crops suitable for manure should be made not by the Forest Department, but by the Agricultural Department. The efforts made by the former to this end in Guntūr and in Nellore and, it is believed, in other districts also have so far resulted in failure or in a very small measure of success. In Nellore in particular an attempt had been made in a manner particular exasperating to the ryots. A small plot surrounded by a so-called fence, a few inches high, had been closed to grazing for the purpose of planting Sesbania in the midst of a large area frequented by the ryots' cattle. In all places in all districts it is very difficult to find suitable soil for growing these crops in the forests. They are not forest crops at all, but field crops, and the knowledge needed for growing them is not sylvicultural but agricultural. Nor is the Forest Department the most suitable agency for distributing the seeds when they have been obtained. The Committee therefore recommend that the seed be supplied by the Agricultural department, and distributed to the ryots through the Tahsildars and other Revenue Officials who are more in touch with the cultivating class.

Conditions in Anantapur district.

76. In Anantapur a peculiar local difficulty was brought to the notice of the Committee. As already mentioned one of the two chief staples used for green

manure is *Cassia auriculata.* The bark of this shrub is of very great value for the tanning industry. The right to collect the bark, which is obtainable mostly in unreserved land, is sold annually to contractors for a very large sum, and it is not surprising to find the interests of the rice cultivator and the interests of the tanner coming into frequent collision. This was perhaps more than usually the case in the present year, when the contractors had paid an extra large sum, as much as Rupees 90,000, for the right to collect the bark, and of course desire to make a reasonable profit. On the other hand the exceptionally good rains had caused large areas which are usually left waste to be cultivated with rice. It is clearly undesirable that the large revenue obtained from the sale of this bark should be given up. Quite apart from the serious loss of revenue to the State and the grave blow that would be struck at the important tanning industry (a result which perhaps would be viewed with equanimity by the Forest department), the collection of this bark gives employment to a large number of people of the very poorest class in this barren district. On the other hand the interests of the agriculturists must be protected. On the whole the Committee are of opinion that both interests are sufficiently protected by the existing rules on the subject if these are enforced. They consider, however, that a circular on the subject issued by a former Collector was liable to create an erroneous impression that the contractors could with impunity prevent the villagers from taking the leaves they wanted for agricultural purposes, to which they have a clear right under rule 6 of the rules under section 26 of the Forest Act. The Committee consider that this circular should be withdrawn.

General.

Financial forecast impossible.

77. It is difficult to give even a rough estimate of the financial effect of the Committee's proposals; all that can be done is to make some general forecast of the way in which each proposal, if accepted, may affect the forest revenue Expenditure will not be involved, as the Committee have not recommended any extra expense, and would earnestly deprecate any reduction of the establishment in consequence of the transfer of the grazing grounds to village management. As they have endeavoured to make clear in the course of the report, some part of the present troubles is due to the deficient establishments, which are far too small to protect effectually, much less to do anything in the way of improvement to the forests in their charge. The transfer of the subordinate establishment, now employed in watching the grazing grounds, to the forest proper will enable them to protect what is left more effectively. As regards the supervising staff the number should, if anything, be increased, as, in addition to supervising the forest proper, they will have the duty of inspecting and reporting on the forests which are managed by the village community, and so if the improved method of patrol advocated by the Committee is adopted, there would be work for more men of the Deputy Ranger and Forester class. There should, however, be some saving by the reduction of the number of watchers.

78 As regards the revenue, the proposals of the Committee, with reference to fuel and leaf manure will have little effect on the revenue derived by the State from these sources. The chief difference in the revenue derived from grazing will be due to limitation of grazing in the forest proper, if this is carried out. The reduction in the revenue will be proportionate to the decrease in the number of animals admitted, but until the forest officers have determined what the limitation should be for each forest, it is impossible to give even a rough forecast of the amount of decrease. The Committee, however, are convinced that the Government, who have already pronounced in favour of limitation, will not regret any loss of revenue from this source, since it will be amply repaid from the increase in the capital stock in the forest and will ultimately be re-couped in cash by the extraction and sale of more fuel and timber. Some falling off in the grazing revenue must also be expected from the disafforestation of forests of Class III, fuel plantations, and of Class VI, the absolutely useless reserves. The small sacrifice of revenue from these sources will be borne with equanimity by the most ardent economist. In neither case is it fair that any revenue should be derived at all. Every one is aware that there is no grazing at all in successful casuarina plantations, and the grazing revenue will still be derived from the areas which are found suitable for grazing and not wanted for planting. The revenue derived from the forests of Class VI, lands useless even for grazing, has really almost

amounted to blackmail. Permits taken for such areas were generally taken not for the purpose of grazing but as an insurance against unintentional trespass. A more serious sacrifice of income is, the Committee hope, to be expected from the various measures suggested to remove the lower subordinate, where possible, from contact with the rural population and to supervise him more effectively where such contact will still exist. There should be a large decrease in the amount of fines and compounding fees credited to Government. This decrease will doubtless be as welcome as would be a falling off of the revenue derived from the punishment of any other form of crime, provided always that it means a real reduction in the number of crimes committed.

Summary of replies to the questions in the Government Order.

79. The Committee will now proceed to summarise their replies to the various questions on which they were directed to report in the order in which they are mentioned in the Government reference.

(1) *Whether the existing system of charging fees for grazing affords ground directly or indirectly for any legitimate grievance and if so, of what nature* ?—The grievances are numerous. They are mostly due to the proximity of the less valuable reserves to villages and cultivation, and to the insufficiently supervised contact of the minor Forest establishment with the villagers.

(2) *Whether the cattle of ryots in villages in the neighbourhood of a forest should or should not have preference over other cattle in the matter of grazing* ?—The Committee are of opinion that they should.

(3) *Whether for purpose of granting grazing concessions to the ryots of villages in the neighbourhood of forests, it is necessary and possible to distinguish local agricultural cattle from other cattle* ?—No such distinction can be made by Government agency, but it can be made by the villagers themselves and they should be encouraged to make it.

(4) *Whether the abolition or reduction of grazing fees for local agricultural cattle is desirable, and if so, for what reason* ?—It is not desirable.

(5) *What would be the direct or indirect effect upon the forests of any such abolition of grazing fees, differentiating as far as possible between forests which are intended or worked mainly for the production of timber and those which are intended or worked mainly for fuel* ?—If accompanied by limitation, *nil*; if not, pernicious.

(6) *What measures should be taken to limit the cattle admitted to graze in a forest to such a number as can be grazed without causing progressive deterioration of the forest* ?—The forests should be classified as suggested by the Committee. In class 1, mostly distant cattle will be grazed, and it is easy to limit the number to be allowed at each camping place. In class 2, the limitation must be fixed by the departmental officers, but the limited number of permits may be distributed by village panchayats. In class 4, the grazing of the area in its village limits may be assigned to a village for a fixed payment. If the village cattle exceed the possibility of the area, the limit must be laid down by the department and the village panchayat must select the cattle to be admitted. In class 5, as a rule, limitation need not be compulsory, but it is hoped that in many parts, the villagers themselves will enforce it.

(7) *Whether the present system of allotting and distributing permits for grazing is susceptible of any improvement, and if so, in what direction* ?—Yes. Permits may be dispensed with altogether in many areas and where they are necessary, they should wherever possible, be distributed by the villagers themselves.

(8) *In areas where there are small and scattered reserves near villages, whether such reserves should be retained or be handed over to the Revenue Department or to the villagers* ?—As a rule such reserves should be entrusted to village panchayats for a fixed payment but they should not be disafforested.

(9) *Whether the present system of disposal of firewood is open to any and what objections, and what further facility for procuring supplies from such forests would the Committee suggest* ?—The present policy of the Government is in the opinion of the Committee correct. They hope that if it is carried out vigorously, it will result in a considerably increased supply.

(10) *Whether the conclusions announced in G.O. No.* 1605, *Revenue, dated* 29*th May* 1911 *require any and if so what modifications*?—No modifications are required except that the duty of producing and distributing seeds of green manuring crops should be transferred from the forest to the agricultural and Revenue departments.

(11) *If reserved forests have failed to meet the wants of the villagers in the neighbourhood, in respect of pasture, fuel, and leaves for manure, to what causes do the Committee attribute such failure, and what remedies would the Committee suggest consistently with the preservation of such forests in the permanent interests of the people*?—The Committee are of opinion that the chief cause has been that all forests have hitherto been treated alike. The remedy they would suggest is that classification of the forests on the line which they have suggested and the consequent removal wherever possible of the contact of the minor forest subordinates with the rural population.

(12) *The cost to the provincial finance of each of the measures proposed by the Committee*?—There will inevitably be some loss of revenue but the Committee are completely unable to make even a rough forecast of the amount. They hope that it will not be great and that it will be more than counterbalanced by the benefits to be obtained.

Conclusion.

80. The Committee have now discharged the task assigned to them by Government. They are under no delusion that their proposals are calculated to usher in the millennium or that, so long as it exists, the Forest Department or the policy of forest reservation will become popular. They claim simply to have made such recommendations as, after prolonged enquiry and discussion and after anxious thought, they consider likely to remove the more burning of the present grievances of the rural population in their relations with the Forest Department, and to have refrained from suggesting any measures which will tend to relax the control of the Government over such forests as are necessary for the good of the country and as cannot be managed by the people themselves. They feel confident that, if their recommendations are approved, if a whole-hearted endeavour is made by the officers of Government to make them successful, and if they are accepted by the public, not in a spirit of captious criticism but with the wish and the intention to give them a fair trial, the Government will lose little by them while they must result in benefit to the rural population and in the at least partial healing of the running sore which has for so long tainted the atmosphere of village life in many parts of this Presidency.

We have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servants,

W. O. HORNE, *President*.
P. KESAVA PILLAI,
M. RAMACHANDRA RAO,
G. F. PADDISON,
J. S. SCOT,
} *Members*.